

# **“It’s the end of the ‘University’ as we know it”**

**The realisation of the Bologna Process:  
cases from England and Greece**

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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## **Abstract**

The present thesis focuses on the utility of discourse at different research levels, for which the Bologna Process (BP) is being used as an observed example. It explores the possibilities and limitations of discourse as a methodological, theoretical and as an analytical tool applied to the collected secondary and primary data. In doing so, it offers an interpretive and reflexive account of the BP initiatives and the processes of their realisation in four different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The empirical focus of this research is the BP, which is an ongoing attempt at the formation of a 'European Higher Education Area' (EHEA). The research centres on the different levels of the EHEA discourse and its recontextualisation from a European regional level to a state level and from there to an institutional one.

The BP is a peculiar case in that it is not a legislative policy, but it has been widely adopted by both European Union (EU) and non-EU member states as an initiative within the European geographical space. The degree of change that the BP promotes for European HE within a specified period of time raises important questions about forms of governmentality. While there have been struggles within the different levels and dimensions of the BP its realisation has been rather 'efficient' and this is evident in HEIs governance. In most participating countries educational change towards the Bologna goals has been introduced at an education policy level, even though the extent of the implementation of the recommendations has varied from country to country. Indeed, most European HEIs had already actively attempted to introduce some of the regional initiatives even before the policy began to take effect.

The data which provided the basis for this study are in the form of official documents and interviews. These data were generated in two countries; England and Greece.

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To Eirini and Poly

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### Acronyms

ACA	Academic Cooperation Association
APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation
BP	Bologna Process
CRE	European Rectors Committee
EAIE	European Association for International Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEC	European Economic Community
EFMD	European Foundation for Management and Development
EHE	European Higher Education
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EHEI	European Higher Education Institution
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
ERA	European Research Area
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
KE	Knowledge Economy
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Area
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European and Economic Cooperation
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
WTO	World Trade Organisation
TQM	Total Quality Management
NARIC	National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility

## Introduction

The main research focus of my thesis is on the utility of discourse as a research tool at the different levels of policy research, such as the methodological, the theoretical and the analytical. In this case the Bologna Process (BP) is being used as an observed example allowing me to explore the possibilities and limitations of discourse as a methodological, theoretical and as an analytical tool applied to secondary and primary data. Thus the empirical focus of this research centres on the different levels of the EHEA discourse and its recontextualisation from a European regional level to a state level and from there to an institutional one. In doing so, I am concerned to offer an interpretive and reflexive account of the BP initiatives and the processes of their realisation in four different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

For the exploration of the BP as an exemplary and empirical policy case my research interest will have a twofold focal point. On the one hand I will focus on the official documents related to this policy and on the other, on the collected primary data, which will highlight the implications of the policy at an institutional level. In other words, the research will explore the spectrum of policy as text and policy as discourse. For this reason the research questions of this study will take three directions: a) policy formation; why was this policy formulated and why at this historical moment, an issue which I will address in relation to the discourse that lies in the language of the official documents, and b) policy realisation; how this policy is understood, appreciated and realised, which will require focusing on the conflicts, links, oppositions, struggles, changes and relationships within and between the policy processes. The final and overarching question though is related to c) policy spaces; what is the outcome of this policy and how does its discourse move within the spaces that the policy process creates? Thus, in this research I will explore policy on macro, meso and micro levels, which are interpreted in this context as the regional – EU/European – national and institutional levels, and the understanding of the BP by the higher education



participants and finally, and the effect of the policy consequences on the formulation of HE institutions' and their participants' sense of themselves, their work and their practice.

The attempt to create a EHEA raises issues of management, funding, governance, evaluation and quality assurance, accreditation, the usage of ICT and student and staff mobility, as much as issues concerned with the social role of tertiary institutions and their performance in relation to labour, the economy and culture as well as national, regional and global requirements. Within this context, an extended appreciation of the research questions locating my research can be expressed as follows:

The complexity of the BP politics, requires as a primary aim of this study the identification of the agents, i.e. ministers, rectors, business, students, academic unions, participating in the BP follow up groups in order to identify which voices are being heard. This is located within a process of identifying the discourse of the BP itself, in order to examine its elements and aspects and how they work on the idea of what HE is. In other words, I am interested in how the European policy discourse in higher education is being formulated, by whom, why and who it is going to benefit.

This will be realised by following the way in which the policy discourse moves from one level to another. Explicitly, my intention is to explore and discuss the recontextualisation of the BP policy discourse from a regional to a national level, from a national to an institutional level and the relation of policy to global tendencies. The EHEA as claimed in the Bologna Declaration is necessary as EHE faces 'internal and external challenges'. Within the declaration, those challenges are stated as the 'growth and diversification of higher education, the employability of graduates, the shortage of skills in key areas, the expansion of private and transnational education, etc.' In asserting these issues, the ministers showed recognition of global tendencies within HE. The Bologna Declaration

came about as an answer to the 'global demands' on HE at regional level. The Process shows the willingness to transform EHE from the bottom, starting at the institutional level, through the member states' HE policy practices at the national level.

Finally, at the empirical level, while identifying the changes that the policy discourse produces this study will address whether and how the European tertiary pedagogical space, as policy space in this research, is being transformed. At which levels these transformations occur and what the implications are for tertiary institutions. Specifically, I attend to a set of issues which arose in the interviews, as aspects of transformation, especially those of access, quality and governance and the impact that they might have upon the perceptions and the social role of universities.

The effects of transformation will be examined by looking at the way in which the everyday working practice of the HEIs participants is being influenced by the changes that the BP guidelines have set in train for European tertiary education, how they adapt to the new features of tertiary education and how this adaptation influences or re-shapes their positioning in it. It is the accounts of the HEIs participants that will highlight the policy processes at the everyday level.

### **The Bologna Process**

This thesis is concerned with the Bologna Process (BP), which crystallises the on-going attempt to create a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The BP is a very idiomorphic expression of the European national education ministers' initiatives towards regional convergence in higher education (HE). Its peculiarities extend from its space and time-related arrangements to the non-legislative nature of the process.

Taking a closer look at it, the first of these peculiarities lies within the nature of the BP itself. It is largely perceived as an initiative of the European education ministers. The Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999 by 29 ministers and it is located outside the EU framework. For this reason non-EU member states are Bologna signatory countries. In my thesis I argue that the EU's influence on the BP, at the levels of its administration, its move towards institutionalisation and also the decision-making processes, is such that I cannot but draw a direct connection between the Process and the EU framework, even if it is located at its margins. Nevertheless, other researchers overcome this dilemma concerning the nature of the BP as EU-driven or established through the cooperation of European countries, by discussing the Europeanisation of HE policy beyond and around the BP. Again, for me the significance of such a policy process does not lie in its educational implications but, most importantly, in its discursive practices as the means for the transformation of the ideational signifier in HE policy from the national to the regional.

The second peculiarity of the BP is the absence of a legal framework, which constructs a condition of non-obligatory and voluntary participation on the part of the signatory countries. Thus, participation in the process appears as a 'free choice' made by countries for their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as part of an adaptation to global and regional HE trends. In this study, my aim is to discuss, as far as possible, the space in which alternative options are available to countries and institutions in relation to European HEI governance.

Thirdly, the realisation of BP initiatives is bound to time limitations. The realisation process has a deadline of 2010. Hence, the BP appears in the present research as ongoing and as yet unfinished on completion of this research. In this way, this thesis can only be described as a 'snapshot' in relation to time and as 'an indicative example' in relation to space. Moreover, the ongoing character of the BP while this research was being conducted raises two issues. The first is the changes in terminology within the BP official documents. For example, the name

of the process has changed from 'European Higher Education Space' to 'European Higher Education Area'. The second is related to the stage of the process that the primary data represent in terms of the number and variety of countries and agents participating in the process and also in terms of the evolution of the process through its decision making. However, the body of official documents that constitute the BP, perceived in this research as secondary data, follow the latest developments of the process in an attempt to describe the evolution of the discourse and give an insight into procedural operations during the realisation of the initiatives. Finally, the peculiarities discussed above increase the degree of complexity of conducting education policy research and, for this reason, the modality of this study, in terms of both research approach and presentation, is, to a considerable degree, constrained by them and adopts an unorthodox style.

### **An unorthodox presentation**

Moving on to the structure according to which this PhD thesis is presented and written, I should acknowledge its unorthodox mode. For this reason, I shall take the time to offer a brief explanation of my decisions concerning the structure of the thesis.

In relation to theoretical or rather epistemological approaches towards policy analysis, I chose to concentrate on and develop my research around the concept of discourse. The personal challenge was to present various possible ways of using the concept in an attempt to expose the different ways it can be applied at the different levels of education policy research. Hence, to a considerable degree, the prioritisation of the application of the concept of discourse is the main concern of the research and the BP serves as an empirical case within which the possibilities of its application can be explored.

In relation to the methodological and analytical approach in education policy research concerning the BP, the fluidity of the process and the mutable ways in which it is articulated in different countries and HEIs, requires an approach that offers a stable variable throughout all the levels of the research.

In relation to the outward appearance of this work, my aim was to present the various sections of this thesis in a way that would allow me, as the researcher and writer, to show their interconnection and also to offer to the reader the possibility of reading them independently from each other.

### **A guide to the reader**

The thesis is structured around three main parts which illustrate the utilisation of discourse, as follows: Part A: Discourse as a Methodological Tool, Part B: Discourse as a Theoretical Tool and Part C: Discourse as an Analytical Tool. Each part is divided into two main chapters, the Content of Discourse and the Concept of Discourse. Each of the two main chapters aims to illustrate different aspects of the discourse in each one of its utilisations. The former is empirically driven and the latter presents the outcome of the interactions between the empirical focus of this research and the usage of discourse – methodological, theoretical or analytical.

In Part A the discussion concerns the utility of discourse as a methodological tool. In Chapter 1, for the articulation of my arguments, I explore the education policy research literature in an attempt to identify a suitable methodological framework for my research. This search ends with the adoption of Ball's Policy Cycle at an epistemological level. For the exploration of the research I continue with a discussion of methodological issues and finally I introduce the research methods used in this study. In Chapter 2, I start at the empirical level with a presentation of the official BP documents, before moving on to a discussion of

them and then concluding with an illustration of the features of the BP EHE discourse.

In Chapter 3, my focus is on the way the notion of discourse may be utilised as a theoretical tool. My exploration is realised through the conceptualisation of discourse in relation to my research on the BP. The chapter aims to illustrate how features of the BP discourse connect with features of the globalisation discourse and specifically the Knowledge Economy (KE) discourse. In order to demonstrate this, I start with a presentation of the globalisation discourse, then I aim to trace globalisation features within the education policy discourse and, finally, I move on to explore the relationship between globalisation and BP discourse. My intention focuses on bringing to light the 'demand/response' character of the relationship between globalisation and the BP discourse by highlighting their conceptual interconnection.

Chapter 4, on the Concept of Discourse, aims to show how the notion of discourse theoretically offers the possibility of tracing and justifying current changes and policies in HE. This section starts with an examination of discourse as a theoretical tool in an attempt to portray the theoretical scope of the concept and also the position of the researcher within a discursive framework. The outcome of this discussion is the prioritisation of the quality assurance discourse and a brief overview of theorisations of quality. The sections that follow can be described as an amalgamation of theory and data. They are based on ideas that flourished while working with the data and are on the margins of both theory and analysis. The discussion starts with an exploration of the operation of regulatory mechanisms and policy technologies in the context of the BP and leads to an introduction of the concepts of governmentality and governance as descriptive notions of the BP. *Governmentality* offers a conceptual framework for the description, theorisation and analysis of the BP within a neo-liberal context, while *governance* opens the space for exploring operational procedures at an institutional and policy level.

The third of the thesis (Part C) explores the utilisation of discourse as an analytical tool. In Chapter 5, I introduce a model of analysis, which is developed, based on the outputs of the interrelation between the theoretical approach of this research, the methodological concerns that arose while investigating the BP as an HE policy discourse and working on the data.

In Chapter 6, I offer an example of the way in which the BP may be analysed in relation to the previously developed model. From this analytical perspective, I focus on two issues, those of quality and governance, and examine how they appear in each one of the four HEIs under research through the policy processes in these institutions.

The final part (Part D) of the thesis is a presentation of conclusions. The discussion is structured to present the outcomes of the utility of discourse in the different levels and contexts of the policy research using the BP as a policy example. The different levels include the methodological, the theoretical and the analytical and the different contexts consist of the global, the regional, the national and the institutional.

### **This research and beyond**

In this final part of the introduction, I would like to take the opportunity to offer two general remarks concerning this PhD research, the BP, their relation and the context beyond them.

I shall start with my primary concern in relation to this research, and that is the space that the discourse allows for agency or the agency within discourse while using a discourse-based approach to education policy research and analysis. Specifically, my fear was, and still is, that the analysis of the BP may become trapped within a discursive context of deterministic positions and fragmented

conditions. I hope that I have managed to show that the space for agency exists, even though it is minimal, and that it relies in the recontextualisation of the policy processes where the subjects may act focusing on a differentiated element. It is the case that when you realise and discuss the discourse of the policy process then you are already one step further towards the expression of a counter-discourse. If the discourse did not allow the space for this, it is only philosophically logical that the subject would not be able to recognise the existence of the discourse.

This first concern leads to my anxiety about the presentation of the primary data in this research. It could be claimed that my thesis is bound to be an unbalanced presentation concerning the analysis. However, as I have already briefly mentioned and will discuss and explain more fully in the following chapters, this PhD thesis is concerned with the utility of discourse at different research levels and the exploration of policy processes for which the BP is used as an empirical example. Moreover, and from a different point of view, a mode of analysis appears in every section of the thesis in an attempt to establish a basis for discussing the primary data. These data offer the voices, the perspectives and the reality of the interviewees, but there is no value in them without the previous discussion and exploration of the BP official discourse and its counter discourses. Analytically, I chose to focus on two issues, quality and governance, due to time and length limitations. Nevertheless, at this moment, I feel confident that this work, and the model developed within it, could be used in a creative way for the exploration of other notions within the BP discourse or for the analysis and conceptualisation of other HE policy counter-discourses.

Finally, this research is far from exhaustive, both in relation to discourse and to the BP. I could certainly have explored various other aspects of European HE that have been excluded from this work, or explored those that are included in a different way. These include the social dimensions and implications of the BP as seen in a broader European context.



### **A note on discourse**

This research can be said to have used and to have been constructed by discourse. As discussed previously, I use the notion of discourse to organise my thesis methodologically, theoretically and analytically. The centrality of discourse consequently necessitates a rather unorthodox presentation of this research. I shall start the discussion of the research from a methodological point of view, after which I will move on to its theoretical and analytical aspects in order to justify the pre-mentioned centrality of discourse.

Throughout this thesis, the notion of 'discourse' appears with different applications, each of which draws on its different features. Discourse appears as a methodological tool, a theoretical tool and finally, an analytical one. On each of the three levels, I will discuss the notion of discourse in relation to a) its content, which is driven by the empirical focus of this research, the Bologna Process (BP), and b) its conceptualisation, which is driven by the interaction of the content of the discourse with the level – methodological, theoretical or analytical – on which the notion appears. I shall start the discussion with the presentation of 'discourse' as a methodological tool which focuses on the contextual presentation of the research, the research interests and the methodology utilised to tackle the above. The prioritisation of methodological clarifications is justified, I believe, as methodology constitutes the basis for the understanding of my theoretical and analytical positioning in this research.

## **Part A: Discourse as a Methodological Tool**

In this part (Part A), I will examine the notion of discourse as a methodological tool in relation to i) its concept and ii) its content. The conceptual chapter in this part appears before the empirical one, as it aims to present and contextualise the research. Thus, in Chapter 1, my aim is to support methodologically the idea that policy can be described and thought of as 'discourse', presented in terms of Ball's conceptualisation of policy (Ball, 1992, 1994). This 'policy cycle' framework that underpins the logic of this research is primarily understood and thus used as a methodological tool. In Chapter 2, I will try to justify and rationalise my decision to conceptualise the BP as a solid and unified EU policy on HE. In order for this to be accomplished, I will draw upon my secondary data, which consist of the BP official documents. Finally, an overview of the policy and the policy sociology literature will be used to support the usage of the notions of 'policy cycle' and 'policy as discourse'.

### **Chapter 1: The Concept of Discourse**

In this chapter I will examine from a methodological perspective the concept of policy discourse. I will focus on why and how policy can be seen as a discourse and the interactions and implications of such assertions for the methodology of policy analysis. In doing so I shall first start by contextualising the Bologna Process within education policy research. Then I shall present my research interests and identify a suitable methodological framework for my research. To that end, I will go back to the policy analysis literature and track the evolution of the notion of 'policy as discourse', I shall discuss some of the methodological issues arising in the context of policy sociology and discourse-based policy analysis, and finally I will connect the above issues to the BP research.

## **Contextualising the Bologna Process research**

I shall discuss here the very first issues that arose while I was trying to sketch this research and led me to decisions significant for the orientation of the research focus and interest. I will start with the major problem that underlines the BP as a research subject. That is its ongoing nature. In the Bologna Declaration, which is the first official document of the attempt to create a 'Common European Area Higher Education', with a significant participation of education ministers, a deadline of 2010 was set for complete policy implementation. Thus, at the present moment, and with respect to time limitations, the Process is more than half way through<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, this research and its results should be seen as part of the process of compliance, taking into consideration the possibility of marginal changes, either in the approach of the EU member states and other European countries signatory to the BP or in the policy itself. It is more of a snapshot of a policy in the process of dissemination and realisation, than an analysis of a policy in place, in which its consequences are worked through either nationally or institutionally and certainly it does not deal with HE actors in general.

Furthermore, there are concerns that arose from the politics related to the BP. Primarily, the idea for EHE convergence began with the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998, signed by four ministers of education and continued with the Bologna Declaration in 1999 signed by 29 ministers. Up to that point the Process was an initiative of European ministers of education. Interestingly, though, the European Commission actively supported the Sorbonne Follow-up group and the preparation for the Bologna meeting, as it funded the study 'Trends in learning structures of higher education in EU/EEA countries' carried out by the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences. Also, it was

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<sup>1</sup> It has to be noted that the starting point of this PhD research was in October 2002 and that the interviews were conducted within different periods of time between 2003 and 2005

represented in the Bologna meeting. As it appears in a draft version of the Bologna Declaration, the Ministers were seriously considering the option of trying to construct a EHEA within the EU framework of co-operation and at the same time leaving space for non-EU co-operation. The deleted from the final version paragraph read as follows:

[W]e will pursue the ways of intergovernmental co-operation, together with those in the framework of the European Union (where applicable, on the basis of the subsidiarity principle and availing ourselves of the Strengthened Co-operation instrument) and of the other governmental and non governmental European organisations with competence on higher education (quoted in Zgaga 2004: 185, quoted in Racké, 2006, p.9).

As Racké (2006) explains in her paper based on interviews with Commissioners of that period, the French and English education ministers, Claude Allègre and Tessa Blackstone respectively, showed firm opposition to any reference to the 'EU' and/or 'governmental organisations', and also were 'vehemently opposed', in Racké's words, to the involvement of the European Commission. However, she also notes that "the Italian organisers and some of the smaller countries, such as Ireland or Finland, wanted to include the European Commission as a partner" and that "the decision to exclude the Commission from the process was taken in the presence of a Commission representative" (Racké, 2006, p.9).

It is clear from the above that both the politics within the signatory countries in the BP meetings as well as their position within the discursive process, which controls whose voice gets to be heard, what is said and with what authority (Ball, 1993), are significant for the understanding of the policy formation, especially in the contexts of policy influence and policy text production. Nonetheless, the 'role' of the European Commission remains, I argue, of considerable importance. This claim is based on the understanding that in the broader context in which policies

and initiatives come into being within the EU framework the Commission played a larger part in the story than that which is usually assigned to it.

It was only after 1999 that the European Commission adopted the BP as it coincided with its interests. As Christiansen explains:

The commission is central to the integration process because in most areas of EU policy-making it carries the sole responsibility for proposing new legislation. The monopoly of initiative with respect to most first-pillar matters has made the Commission a pivotal actor in the EU policy-process, placing it in a privileged position in relation to national governments, organised interests and the European Parliament. It has allowed the commission a part in framing the issues, setting the agenda and, in a wider sense, shaping the evolution of the European Union (Christiansen, 2001, p.96)

However, due to the multiplicity of actors and interests introduced here, the ascription of accountability to any body, in relation to the evolution of the process, appears as complex and problematic. Christiansen (2001) also discusses the mode that the Commission adopts in order to develop a policy schedule regarding integration in areas that were not discussed in the European treaties. According to him:

In fields such as education, research and development and the environment, on which the treaties were silent, the Commission developed, first, a Community agenda, and, subsequently, the policy tools to facilitate Community action (Ibid., p.98) The pattern of Commission activity in this period was to circumvent potential obstruction of national governments by involving a wide range of non-governmental groups and interests in deliberation about new policy initiatives...they (groups and organisations) would then emerge favourable to the development of a

European policy in the design of which they had participated. The advantage of such strategy was that the emerging transnational network of interest groups and non-governmental organisations, supportive of a Community role in social regulation, would eventually put pressure on national administrations and governments to 'fall into line'. At the very least, the Commission could point to 'demand' from private interests in a given Community policy, and in this way legitimise its activity in the unchartered waters outside the treaty. (ibid. p.99)

It can be said that the main issue for the EU and the Commission is integration at all levels. However, the pace of integration differs at the different levels. Mazey describes the process and pace of integration as falling within an 'era of 'flexible' integration' as "the EU now resembles the proverbial curate's egg: in certain areas it is a supranational, legal order; in other policy areas integration is – for the moment at least – based upon voluntary co-operation between sovereign states"(Mazey, 2001 p.29). However, the peculiar and non-linear level and pace of member states' integration does not undermine the strength of policy initiatives. Nonetheless, this differentiation can be seen as regulated by the mechanisms of EU or European governance, based on voluntary participation and voluntary co-operation on the part of the member states.

Another issue arises from the context of the BP in terms of the 'voluntary participation' of the European countries. Participation in the process was classified as voluntary, both in the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent official documents of the Process

It is **a commitment freely taken** by each signatory country to reform its own higher education system or systems in order to create overall convergence at European level. The Bologna Declaration is not a reform imposed upon national governments or higher education institutions. Any pressure individual countries and higher education institutions may feel

from the Bologna process could only result from their ignoring increasingly common features or staying outside the mainstream of change (Bologna Declaration).

The above statement sets the BP as a common European policy in which each signatory country participates 'freely' and takes on the responsibility to realise the policy objectives according to their national tertiary education system. In this way, different countries show variations in their level of compliance to Bologna guidelines in relation to their already existing system. Consequently, and due to the variations in European higher education systems, each country is expected to follow different patterns towards the EHE convergence. Following this, the academic communities in different EU member and non-EU member states present variations in their reactions to the Process.

What I am trying to stress by presenting the above issues, which will become apparent in discussion of the commentary to the BP documents, is that this attempt, although emerging as a unified EHE policy and at the centre of the Commission's interest, cannot overcome not only the distinctions between the different European higher education systems but also the differentiated national, cultural, political, historical and economic features that are embodied in these systems. The nature of the BP, which locates the policy formation and realisation process within and between both the EU and the broader European contexts, can be defined in methodological terms as research problematic, due to the acknowledgement that "no single theoretical framework can encapsulate the totality of European integration. Rather, it is argued that the process of European integration has been a 'multi-faceted, multi-actor and multi-speed' process" (Mazey, 2001, p.29). As a result, this research is bound to these features and defined by them.

In order to overcome the dilemma of locating the BP in either the EU or the broader European context, I chose to use a descriptive framework of policy

decision-making operating within the EU framework, which is presented in the following paragraphs. Even though other researchers attempt to make a strong case for treating the BP mainly as a European process, I believe that examining the Process through the EU policy-making spectrum, even though this is not exhaustive, may offer insightful conceptualisation.

Peterson and Bomberg (1999) presented an analytical framework “which specifies three analytical categories or types of EU decision” (p.5). The importance of their framework lies in the study of the ‘individual decision’ and choice within the EU. As they note, “when *any* choice is made, the result is a decision. All policies are a product of decisions about what to do, how to do it, and how to decide what to do. Decisions are the building blocks of policies” (Ibid, 1999, p.4)

As shown in the following page, Table 2 presented by Peterson and Bomberg (1999) offers a schematic view of the policy decision-making within the EU. They identify three main levels of this a) the super-systemic level, in which they locate history-making decisions; b) the systemic level, in which policy-setting decisions get established; and finally, c) the sub-systemic level, in which policy-shaping decisions are formulated. Each level of the decision-making described in Table 10 engages in the process different institutions and different actors, and also, their decisions are purposefully differentiated.

Peterson and Bomberg suggest that a schematic view of the different levels of decision-making is needed for research on policy within the EU framework. Their point of view concerning the discussion of policy decision-making is located in the field of international relations. The need for the classification of the different levels of decision-making derives from need to identify the level at which the present policy research is located in order to offer a better appreciation and understanding of the processes and possible outcomes connected to it.



We are offered clear, simple criteria to categorise different types of EU decision, specifying, for example, that history-making decisions are choices which determine, fundamentally, the way the Union works. They implicate the very highest political levels and – because they are transformative – they concern both means and ends. Decisions at the systemic level are nearly always about ends, while most ‘policy-shaping’ decisions are about means (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999, p. 272).

**Table 1: Levels of EU decision-making**

Level	Decision Type	Dominant Actors	Example
Super-systemic	History-making	European Council Governments in IGC's European Court of Justice	Endorse White Paper on internal market
Systemic	Policy-setting	Council, COREPER, European Parliament (Under co-decision)	Agree directives to create an internal market for motorbikes
Sub-systemic	Policy-shaping	Commission, Council, Working groups, EP Committees	Propose that all motorbikes licensed in the EU must observe power limits

(Peterson and Bomberg, 1999, p.5)

Locating the BP as a policy decision-making process using Table 1 is, as already mentioned, rather delicate. That is because the BP is identified as European and not as an EU initiative. However, there are significant similarities between the way the BP is articulated as an unofficial EU process and the levels of policy-

shaping described by Peterson and Bomberg and will be discussed in an elaborative way in Chapter 2. The level of policy-shaping is the point in which the 'policy networks' or 'elite networks' are particularly inter-active, aiming at the 'preparation' of decisions and based on a "consensus (build) through informal exchange and backroom bargaining" (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999, p. 8). They describe 'policy-shaping' decisions as follows: "most 'policy-shaping' decisions are taken early in the policy process when policies are being formulated and, in fact, before the EU's formal legislative process even begins. These early stages are when most lobbying activity occurs" (Ibid., p. 21).

What is of most importance in the character of 'policy-shaping' decisions is that they do not determine EU policy. In a way, at the sub-systemic level, with the key actor being the European Commission, the issue at stake is the continuous negotiations between actors over the formulation of a policy proposition. Within this appreciation, the BP can be thought of as a process at the sub-systemic level, as its institutionalisation is based on Follow-up groups, numerous participating actors and no legislative features. Nevertheless, the key features that I will keep from Peterson's and Bomberg's analytical framework are the institutionalised and 'official' operation of policy networks and the dominant position of lobbying and 'backroom bargaining' at the sub-systemic level, to which I will return in the following chapters.

## **Policy Research Literature**

In the present research the Bologna Process is thought of as an EU higher education policy and as a policy discourse. In this section I will focus on why and how policy can be seen as a discourse and the interactions and implications of such an understanding for the methodology of policy analysis. To that end, I will first consider the policy analysis literature and track the evolution of the notion of 'policy as discourse'. Secondly, I will discuss some of the methodological issues

arising in the context of policy sociology and discourse-based policy analysis and finally, I will connect the above issues to the BP research.

It is only through examining the main issues and concerns in education policy analysis arising from the education policy research literature that I will be able to locate the notion of 'policy discourse' in the context of education policy. Specifically this section aims to a) explore the theoretical underpinnings of the education policy and policy sociology research through the discussion of the notion of the 'policy cycle' cycle and the rise of discourse-based research in education policy studies; b) discuss my own ontological and epistemological perspective as it has been constructed by studies in the sociology of education and education policy; c) explore the way in which discourse constructs subjectivities, an issue that will arise in the analysis of the primary data, when HEIs participants are trying to justify and contextualise their actions and opinions - or as far as they see them as theirs – with regard to the realisation of the BP policy initiatives; d) identify any space for agency, even if that is limited, mainly while agents call upon characteristics embedded in them by different discourses; e) clarify that this research focuses on policy processes and their investigation, and on the way in which policy alters subjectivities and the HEIs mission according to the KE discourse through technologies of policy realisation.

In the 1980s and 1990s the main concern regarding the evolution of education policy research was the evident lack of connection between macro-level education policy research and micro-level case studies. Education policy was studied by both policy administrators and academics offering an approach of policy science on the one hand and policy scholarship on the other. The former were more concerned with the issue of carrying out and implementing policy at a practical level, and the latter were more committed to a theoretical apprehension of policy, overlooking the everyday education practice and its problems. As Troyna points out, tended "to turn a blind eye to the strides made by educationists in exploring this field 'at both a theoretical and empirical level'"

(1994b, p.1) even though he recognises that 'things have improved'. Hargreaves (1985) places the problem of the micro-macro gap in the broader context of the sociology of education and states that:

...interactionists have gone back to their classrooms and staffrooms, while macro theorists have moved into the 'state' and education policy. When the current and intensifying educational crisis and its effects on schooling begs decent sociological explanation, this unproductive division of theoretical labour is, in my view, regrettable. (p.24)

Ozga (1987) takes Hargreaves' argument and his appreciation of "sociology of education as increasingly divided between micro-level interactionists and macro-level theoreticians of the state" (p.140), and focuses his point on education policy. She identifies two sources of research on education policy: i) education/administration policy and ii) the sociology of education, with the former merely concerned with policy implementation and practice and the latter with policy theorisation, and with little interaction between them. She emphasises the problem of agency in policy research, and states:

...most of us who have, for example, carried out case studies of LEA policy-making are aware of the gap between the finished account and the reality where individual personality and personal relations were vital in affecting policy outcomes (p.146).

For the "survival and growth of education policy as a field of study, as distinct from education management" (p.148), Ozga suggests a type of research in which theoreticians would provide a type of "ideological and moral leadership... combined with 'linked micro studies'" (p.148). In Ozga's study published in 1990, her argument becomes more explicit when she highlights, "the need to bring

together structural macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro-level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perceptions and experiences" (p.359)

Within the problematisation of the connection of theory and practice and from the perspective of combined macro and micro level analysis with regard to agency, Ball (1993,1994) initiates an innovative approach to the theoretical and analytical level of policy by introducing the 'policy cycle', a primarily methodological set of guidelines for policy analysis. The 'policy cycle' was introduced within the context of 'policy sociology', a term first introduced by Ozga (1987) and which is defined as "rooted in the social science tradition, historically informed and draw(ing) on qualitative and illuminative techniques" (p.144). Ball's proposition for overcoming inconsistencies between macro and micro level was stated as follows:

What we need in policy analysis is a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories. Thus, I want to replace the modernist theoretical project of abstract parsimony with a more post-modernist one of localised complexity (Ball, 1993, p.10). I want to take up the point made that state policy 'establishes the location and timing of the contest, its subject matter and 'the rules of the game'. This I think highlights the importance of policy **as** and **in** discourse. (p.14, emphasis in original)

Theoretically, the 'policy cycle' is an amalgamation of different perspectives, aiming at the creation of a methodological toolbox, which can be broken down, rearranged and merged with other analytical and theoretical concepts for the specific needs of individual policy analysis. Ball writes:

Three epistemologies or analytical perspectives fight to be heard in this theory-work. They are employed as interpretive resources in an exercise in 'applied sociology'. At times they clash and grate against one another but the resultant friction is, I hope, purposeful and effective rather than a distraction. They are: critical policy analysis, post-structuralism and critical ethnography. (1994, p.2)

In a more elaborate view, the 'policy cycle' approach consists of seeing policy both as text and as discourse. Seeing policy as text signifies i) that "authors cannot control the meanings of their texts" and that they "are rarely the work of a single author or a single process of production", ii) that "...the texts, are not necessarily clear, closed or complete, the texts are the product of compromises at various stages" and iii) that "policies shift and change their meaning in the arena of politics" (Ball, 1993, p.11) and this is a space of meanings, conflicts and agency. In seeing policy as discourse, he adopts a Foucauldian approach to discourse, as follows:

discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak...Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so they conceal their own invention" (Foucault, 1977, p.49, in Ball, 1993, p.14). Discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority (Ball, 1990).

In this way, Ball introduces all the features of the Foucauldian notion of discourse to the notion of policy. Moreover, discourse can move and be found at both macro and micro levels. Discourse is both a constructing force that constrains the subject due to the non-reflexive production of the subjects' positions within the

discourse and a force that allows the subject the space for manoeuvre while being recontextualised and reinvented from one level to the other. In the same way, policy can move and be found on different levels and thought of in relation to agency. Moreover, the 'policy cycle' consists of three policy contexts: the context of influence, the context of policy text production and the context of practice, which primarily are contexts of policy recontextualisation.

Ball's notion of the 'policy cycle' has been subject to substantial criticism on the theoretical level from a Marxist point of view, by Hatcher and Troyna (1994). Their main points of criticism are the de-centred position of the state in Ball's conceptualisation of policy analysis and his Foucauldian discursive approach to policy. In relation to the state, they note that:

...the analogy between literary texts and state policy tends to obscure the difference between the discursive and the non-discursive. Unlike texts, policies have to be put into practice in the real life of institutions in order to 'work'. Authors cannot *impose* a response at the level of discourse, whatever their 'readerly' or 'writerly' intentions. In contrast, the state, while it also cannot impose an interpretation at the level of discourse, certainly *can* impose one at the level of practice, and its ability to do so operates at the level of politics, not discourse. (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994, p.163, emphasis in original)

In addition, considering the adaptation of Foucauldian discourse to policy analysis, they note that "the space that Ball creates for human agency by adhering to a pluralist notion of the state is immediately closed down by his analysis in terms of Foucault's notion of 'discourse'" (Ibid, p.167).

They then move on to present Poulantzas' appreciation of Foucault, according to which "no kind of resistance is possible if we follow Foucault's analyses" (Poulantzas, 1978, p. 149, quoted in Hatcher and Troyna, 1994, p. 167). Ball's answer on the state comes as follows:

I do not deny the power of the state, or its forcefulness. But I am unhappy with the totalitarian vision of the state and the disempowerment of 'ordinary' (stressed in the prototype) social actors which that involves (1994, p.172).

He then writes:

I believe my explorations in and around the educational state – the attempt to explore the limits as well as effects of state power within specific circumstances, to investigate the interplay and the counterplay of the economic and political, against a backdrop of economic agenda setting – comes closer to Althusser's vision of the state and relative autonomy than H(atcher) and T(royna) are willing to acknowledge (Ibid, p. 174).

Finally, in relation to his Foucauldian approach, Ball explains:

My point is that if our analyses remain concentrated entirely upon coercive state-centred emanations of power then we run the risk of neglecting other more subtle forms of power which operate through subjectivity and consciousness, the calculated supervision which Foucault calls 'governmentality' (Ibid. p. 175); 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that



allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power' (Foucault, 1979, p. 20 quoted in Ball, 1994, p.175).

What is interesting in the first quotation – see previous page – from Hatcher and Troyna (p.163) is that they focus their criticism of the policy cycle approach on an empirical basis. Their critique rests on the fact that the policy cycle does not work at an empirical level but rather on a methodological one. Ball introduces a dualism in education policy research that is based on the appreciation of policy as text and policy as discourse, offering in this way the spectrum for various understandings and interpretations of policy. In relation to the centrality of the state in education policy research, it can be argued that it is likely that even when the state regulates the realisation of a policy (as text), it might misinterpret the policy (as discourse), deliberately or not, for political reasons, as noted by Hatcher and Troyna. But this can happen at any level of the policy realisation process as the text and/or the discourse are being recontextualised. Thus, the relevance and importance of the policy cycle as a notion rests on its provision of the methodological tools to investigate, describe and thus to analyse such phenomena.

Again in the second presented quote – see previous page - from Hatcher and Troyna (p. 167) the misrecognition of the dualism of policy as text and policy as discourse is apparent. The Foucauldian notion of discourse is based on the idea that the discourse constructs subjectivities and, moreover, those are positioned in a non-reflexive way towards the former. In relation to the deterministic view of policy as discourse, I would suggest that it is balanced with the notion of policy as text. A policy text is liable to have and offer different readings. The opportunity and possibility to read, re-read and/or misread a policy document combined with the chances of alteration of the policy discourse while is being recontextualised from text to practice, offers a space for agency within the policy discourse.

Moving to Ball's response to the Hatcher and Troyna criticisms, it can be said that the state is always a forceful constituent within education policy research and the policy cycle. Interestingly, however, the policy cycle as a methodological approach offers the possibility of moving the research focus from the study of the macro (state) level to the micro (social actors) level in all contexts of the cycle: those of influence, policy text production and practice. In this way, the policy analysis does not get fragmented in a top to bottom description of the state power related to policy but enters the microcosm of social actors in two oppositional ways: a) by concentrating on the discursive power over the construction of subjectivities through the regulation of 'the conduct of conduct' of the population, as described by Foucault with his notion of 'governmentality'; and b) by empowering the subjects as it creates a space of agency by concentrating on the voices, the interpretations, the justifications and the actions of policy realisation by the social actors.

Moreover, Ball (1997) exposes problems of 'time' and 'space' in education policy research on the 1988 reform in the UK and discusses changes in policy from pre-1988 to post-1988. However, these issues can be posed as concerns about any education policy research. As for the issue of time, his concern is i) that research on policy should not be ahistorical, in the sense that no policy can be seen "as ground zero in the history of education" (p. 266) and ii) that education research studies are kinds of 'snapshots' within the policy realisation process. Thus it is difficult to answer the question "at what point is it valid to begin to draw conclusions about the effect of policy?" (Ibid, p. 267). In relation to space, Ball explains that "policy research lacks a sense of place; either in not locating policies in any framework that extends beyond the national level, or in not accounting for or conveying a sense of the locality in analyses of policy realisation" (Ibid, p. 267). As he points out, the only attempts to engage with this issue can be traced in policy research related to 'policy convergence' and/or 'policy borrowing'. The other space-related dimension of his argument is related

to the contextualisation of education policy within the broader spectrum of social reform in which the former appears. He explains that "...education policy research fails to acknowledge the generic quality of reform. That is, education is cut-off from the broader field of social policy change" (ibid. p. 268). The final issue that Ball raises in this paper is related to agency within policy analysis, specifically the way that policy researchers deal with the people acting as agents in the policy process or as research subjects in the policy research, as "by thinking about what sort of people and 'voices' inhabit the texts of policy analysis we also need to think about how we engage with the social and collective identities of our research subjects..." (Ibid, p. 271).

To sum up, the notion of 'policy as discourse', as part of Ball's conceptualisation of the policy cycle, emerged as a methodological perspective within policy sociology and education policy research, in attempts to create links between micro and macro levels education policy analysis, with regard on the one hand to policy time and space orientation, and to the other to acknowledging the role of agency in policy realisation.

## **Methods**

In this part of the introduction I will present the methodology of this research in an attempt to draw together the threads of my argument on the usefulness of the concept of policy as discourse in research methodology regarding the empirical level of the BP research.

My thesis title is "It's the end of the 'University' as we know it"; the realisation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA): cases from England and Greece". My PhD research is based on the official Bologna Declaration policy guidelines for its signatory countries on the structure and organisation of Higher Education and their realisation in four HE institutions located in two Bologna signatory countries. The main objective of the Bologna Declaration policy initiatives is the creation of a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

My research is concerned with current European higher education initiatives at two levels: a) their formulation and the possibility of being regarded as official policy guidelines within an EU and /or European context and b) their realisation within four higher education institutions. Accordingly, at the empirical level of this research I am engaging with two sets of data, secondary and primary. The secondary data are the official BP documents, commentaries on them and the Bologna Follow-up Group documents. The primary data are the interviews conducted with participants in the four higher education institutions under research.

Thus, the methodology used in this research varies in the two different parts of the inquiry. The first part is concerned with the collection, presentation, discussion, codification and analysis of the official documents that make up what is called the "BP". The BP refers to the official proposals for change at the level of European HE and derives from the core body of signatory countries participating in the Process. These proposals for change aim to generate and support attempts towards the creation of the EHEA. Part of the official documentation consists of commentaries on the already proposed procedures and the next steps that need to be taken. The official and commentary documents establish the content of the BP discourse.

The second part of the research refers to the area that the EU policies seek to establish in European tertiary education. I am concerned about whether and how the proposed transformations will influence and change the role and practice of tertiary education institutions. It would be possible to understand the changes imposed on European Higher Education (EHE) by interviewing its participants, while conceptualising the idea of the BP as a tangible and unified EU education policy, which is an issue that I will return to later. Thus, the analysis in the second part of the research is based on data collected, mainly through interviewing participants in different levels and positions in four tertiary institutions.

## **Research Methodology**

One of the most important decisions that a researcher has to make when conducting a research study is to orient the methodological perspective that will be adopted to support it. In my interpretation, this decision, especially in the social sciences, should be able to support, not only issues of research methods that may appear in relation to data collection, codification and analysis, but also the researcher's ontological, epistemological and even political orientations. As Packwood and Sikes (1996) write, "social science research is an ideological undertaking...it reflects a particular world view, opinions and attitudes" (Packwood & Sikes, 1996, p. 336). In the following parts of this section I will present the conceptual framework that underlines the methodological choices made for this research and which consists of a) the notion of the 'policy cycle' and b) a discourse based-approach to research. An overview of the research methods is offered in Appendix 2.

### **The Policy Cycle and the Bologna Process**

The policy cycle has offered methodological, theoretical and analytical insights that have influenced conceptually the present inquiry. However, my research on the BP policy discourse does not present a direct application of the policy cycle approach. Specifically, in order to investigate the policy process, I focused on the dualism offered by the policy cycle that policy, is both a text and a discourse. For this reason, the research is divided into three core parts, in which the notion of discourse is seen as a) a methodological tool, b) as a theoretical tool and c) as an analytical one. Each of the above three parts is divided into two main sections on a) the content of discourse and b) the concept of discourse. The former is based on an attempt to see the policy at the level of 'text', and the latter at the level of ideas underpinning and processes generated by the policy as 'discourse'.

Even though this approach to the presentation of the research may be characterised as unorthodox, I would strongly argue that it not only offers an insight into the relationship and interaction of the dualism of policy as 'text' and as 'discourse', but also allows, within this state of dualism, continuous revision and adaptation to the latest decisions of the BP to be always present on all three levels – methodological, theoretical, analytical. Thus, it offered me during the research the possibility to draw, establish and support connections between the macro, meso and micro levels – regional, national, institutional levels in this research- of focus at different points, and also enabled these connections to take place within the same framework of conceptualisation. Hopefully, this will be apparent through the presentation of the research.

Moving on to a discussion of the policy cycle as a methodological approach of research for the BP, I should stress the significance of the former in setting education policy analysis within the historical, political and social context in which each policy appears. In this research, this entails not only the historicity of the BP as such, but also the broader historical context that led to the creation of the EU and the beginning of globalisation processes (Chapters 3-4); the political consideration of the EU, the BP and EU and non-EU signatory countries; an attempt to draw connections between the BP, as an EU and broader European HE policy initiative, and current political ideologies such as neo-liberalism within post-welfare states, globalisation and regionalisation, which in turn lead to issues of the particular form of governance and governmentality within the EU and European HE; and finally, the possibility of tracing influences and connections between the EHEA reform and other areas of social life through trends such as marketisation, quality control and new managerialism.

Finally, this research is not based on a direct application of the concept of the policy cycle but has adopted it and used it primarily as a tool to guide the conceptualisation of the research. Nevertheless, I will return explicitly to the concept and apply it in the concluding section of the thesis, as a way of summarising, reflecting on, and discussing the outcomes of this research.

In the discussion of the policy research literature I tried to lay out the theoretical context for the arguments in which the notion of policy as discourse was developed as well as the critiques made of it. I shall now move on to the context for the arguments surrounding the usage of discourse and/or policy as discourse in education policy research and policy analysis. By doing so, my aim here is to demonstrate how the notion of discourse can be a helpful methodological tool for the organisation and realisation of policy research.

I shall start by introducing the methodological features of discourse as presented in the literature on the utility of discourse in policy analysis. Codd (1988), regarding the 'analysis of policy content', explores the idea of policy documents as texts, emphasising the power within language and its usage. His argument is constructed on the basis that

...some policy documents legitimate the power of the state and contribute fundamentally to the 'engineering' of consent. Such texts contain divergent meanings, contradictions and structured omissions, so that different effects are produced in different readers (1988, p.235).

Thus, in relation to policy analysis, he suggests the need for a 'textual deconstruction' of policy documents. For that type of analysis, Codd firstly draws upon Saussure's work, in which "*discourse* refers not only to the meaning of language but also to the real effects of language-use, to the materiality of language" (ibid, p. 242, italics in original). Secondly, he adopts the Foucauldian notion of discourse as the carrier for the expression and exercise of power relations. Codd notes that:

In most recent societies, the education system is controlled by the state, but it works to maintain relations of power through the society as a whole. For this reason, the official discourse of the state relating to educational policies...(policies) are obvious instances in which the discourse becomes the instrument and object of power. But discourses operate at a number of levels within educational institutions (ibid, p. 243).

In addition, he defines policy documents "as ideological texts that have been constructed within particular historical and political context" (ibid, p. 244). Presumably, elements of Codd's conceptualisation, regarding the acknowledgement of the historical and social context of policy document production, can be traced in Ball's conception of 'policy as texts'.

Taylor (1997) examines the application of discourse theories in education policy analysis. She expresses their usefulness on a methodological level concerning issues of policy document formation in relation to the economic, social, political and cultural context that shaped them, issues of policy conceptualisation and theorisation in relation to the historical context that allowed and constructed the 'problems' that the policy is concerned with, and finally, issues of policy interpretation within discourse analysis. While most of these issues are discussed in depth in debates on the analysis of education policy, Taylor gives particular attention to the problem of policy interpretation.



Another issue that Taylor locates are the 'state control versus policy cycle debate' (Slee, 1995, in Taylor, 1997, p. 33). Within this context, it is possible to trace issues of extended debates on sociology and education policy such as pluralism versus state control, whether policy making is a coherent or controversial and complex process, issues of the analytical utility of each approach to education policy analysis and moreover, issues surrounding the adoption of a structuralist or post-structuralist approach.

Interestingly, most of the methodological issues arising from debates on education policy analysis can be identified as part of the impact of the policy cycle in this field. In my interpretation, with the development of the notion of the policy cycle Ball introduced a more post-structuralist orientation to policy analysis in contrast to what policy analysis had so far consisted of. For this reason, the debate between structuralism and post-structuralism as different ontological standpoints becomes central, as it is the starting point for issues related to the centrality of the state, the space for agency and agency resistance, and the development of an 'objective' and linear analytical and theoretical perspective to become central for education policy research.

For example, Evans and colleagues (1994) deal with the above issue in their critique of the policy cycle, focusing mainly on the absence of the 'state' and the 'subject' in the Foucauldian conceptual framework. They implicitly express the structural-post-structural conflict as they draw upon Bernstein's critique of Foucauldian discourse as "it is a discourse without social relations" (Bernstein, 1990, p.134, in Evans et al, 1994, p. 59). A reply to this criticism focuses around the argument that social relations are embedded in discourse, as social practices are the space in which any discourse can exercise the power that lies within it. However, I would find it more appropriate to pose the question of what is expected from any theorisation or any analysis. If what is expected is a concrete and solid understanding of the research issue, that is, a policy, its implications and the most appropriate means of implementation, then I suppose that a structuralist theorisation of the social world would be more helpful. In the case

that what is in question is not a policy as such, but the social world that this policy expresses and at the same time forms, then a post-structural approach would be appropriate. Adopting the latter perspective and within the limits of this research, I find that the notion of discourse allows the subject, agent or social actor the space to interpret the social world in a unique way. That space, though, is created and/or compressed at the moment that one discourse meets other counter or oppositional to it discourses. That is due to the multiplicity of discourses, which can be complementary, oppositional, and supportive or embedded in each other, and which as social practices are realised and operated through different institutions and construct subjectivities. At that moment the subject will use features from other discourses – that have worked in different ways and therefore introduced different characteristics in the construction of its subjectivity - these might be political, social, and cultural discourses, and the subject's own characteristics in terms of gender, social class and ethnicity, in order to understand and position itself within the oppositional discourses. However, agency (as action) has less weight in this research. Actors as HEIs participants are interviewed as the means of understanding the policy processes. Thus, what is expected from this research is a close look at the policy processes, the accumulation of policy discourse and the identification of ways that this accumulation may or may not alter the policy's discursive features; either through misunderstandings and misrecognition or opposition found in the views of the HEIs participants. In this way, a multiplicity of social realities is expressed, aligned with the post-structural position of this research.

Moving back to Taylor's appreciation, she argues that the path that methodological debates should now take, regarding the usage of discourse theories in education policy analysis, is located within the 'meaning and interpretation' of discourse (Taylor, 1997,). In relation to interpretation problems, Bacchi (2000) discusses the meanings of discourse. She makes the point that the meaning of the notion of discourse is altered as it is called upon to serve

different purposes in different research rationales by different theorists; that is due to the fact that there is no fixed definition of the notion but rather varying 'understandings' of it. According to Bove, a definition of discourse would "contradict the logic of the structure of thought in which the term 'discourse' now has a newly powerful critical function" (1990, p.53 in Bacchi, 2000, p. 46). However, Bacchi suggests that "policy-as-discourse theorists develop an understanding of discourse that suits their political purpose" and so "they define discourse (then) in ways that identify what they see to be the constraints on change, while attempting to maintain space for a kind of change" (2000, p. 46). Explicitly, she describes 'policy-as-discourse' theorists as "political progressives, loosely positioned on the left of the political spectrum".

Among the other issues that Bacchi identifies in relation to discourse is that of agency, according to which "no one stands outside discourse" (p.45). Thus, within the policy process, "no social actor stands outside the process as either technical adviser or policy planner" (p.49). Nevertheless, she stresses that

while discourse limits what can be said, therefore, there remains a place in these accounts for discursive reconstruction. There is an insistence that social actors can make a difference to the ways in which problems are constituted. This move is accomplished by insisting that discourses are plural and contradictory (Bacchi, 2000, p. 50).

Within this conceptualisation there always lies within the discourse the questions of "what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (Ball, 1993, p.14) and also at what level access to the discourse is allowed to different agents within the power relations that the discourse expresses or the social practices in which it appears. On these issues, Bacchi explains (2000) that "discourses then are not the direct product of intentional manipulation by a few key political actors, but neither are they trans-historical structures operating outside of human intervention".

Thus far I have outlined the major issues, debates and concerns related to the usage of the notion of policy as discourse in education policy analysis. In bringing together the threads of this argument, I will concentrate on the issue of interpretation while utilising a policy as discourse methodology, which, in my understanding, is essential. On a theoretical level, the possibility of interpreting the notion of 'discourse' from a Foucauldian perspective, in different ways, in the process of data analysis within each piece of research, can allow the subject/researcher a space to develop his/her understanding of the policy process under examination. This approach moves beyond a subjective understanding while it focuses on the political decisions that led to specific policy guidelines. Moreover, in my understanding, policies can be seen as social practices expressed through policy texts, while 'discourse' is an inclusive notion, mutable and flexible, which lies within and constructs social practices. Thus, when it is used to conceptualise policy practices, it can offer a rounded understanding of them. The issue of interpretation then, rests upon the questions that each theorist or researcher is willing to or dares to ask, always recognising the limits set on them by the discourses that construct their subjectivity. Furthermore, in relation to the deterministic perspective of the position 'that no one stands outside discourse', I would have to wonder whether, if this is the case, how was it that anyone ever realised the existence of discourse? Moreover, the theorisation of discourse is a discourse in itself. Since none of us stands outside of it, different interpretations coexist as oppositional or conflicting possibilities, which create or produce the conceptualisation of discourse. However, the ability to have a variety of appreciations demonstrates that the individual social characteristics of the subject are still in play, that is, a researcher can find freedom within discourse.

## Discourse-based Approach and the Bologna Process

In an attempt to characterise my research, I will adopt the term 'discourse-based approach'. As MacLure (2003) writes, "if I were to define a discourse-based approach to educational research (a problematic task, as we will see later), one of the more general things I might say is that you have *to suspend your belief in the innocence of words and the transparency of language as a window on an objectively graspable reality*" (2003, p.12 emphasis in the original). Methodologically, a discourse-based approach can be seen to go along with what Hargreaves has characterised as a 'post-modern theoretical position'. As Hargreaves explains, "adopting a post-modern theoretical position involves denying the existence of foundational knowledge on the grounds that no knowable social reality exists beyond the signs of language, image and discourse" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 39). A discourse-based approach rests on the conception that no social reality exists beyond and outside the effects of language and discourse. Within this understanding, discourse-based research attempts to explore how the socially-produced ideas that construct the social reality first came into being and how they are sustained through social practices. This position, translated into research methodology, aims to focus the research and analysis not only on the 'texts' under investigation, in the case of this research the official Bologna documents and the collected interviews, but also the discourses that underline and construct them and the context in which they appear and are of significance. In the case of this research, the discourse-based approach offers the possibility to go beyond a policy-documents analysis, that of the official Bologna documents, into tracing the discourses, ideas and processes that these documents both construct and maintain.

It is also important for discourse-based research to discuss the method, mechanism and technique that would lead to the selection of research tools but also to accept and appreciate its significance as a methodology, and thus to identify and describe both the possibilities for new paths that discourse as a

methodological tool opens for researchers and analysis, but also the restrictions and limitations that it imposes upon them. Phillips and Hardy (2002) support the conception of discourse-based research and analysis within a broader methodological context; they explain their position as follows.

The reason that discourse analysis attempts to include a concern with text, discourse, and context relates to the fact that it represents a methodology – not just a method – that embodies a “strong” social constructivist view of the social world (Gergen, 1999 referenced in Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 5). Discourse analytic approaches share an interest in the constructive effects of language and are a reflexive – as well as an interpretive – style of analysis (Parker and Burman, 1993 referenced in Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 5). In this regard, discourse analysis comprises not only a set of techniques for conducting structured, qualitative investigation of texts; but also a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 5).

The present thesis is primarily concerned with the prospect of offering an interpretive and reflexive account of the BP initiatives and the processes of their realisation in four different HEIs. It tells a ‘story’, a ‘story’ of policy processes. In my interpretation, this ‘story’ is a conceptualised understanding of the social context under research’ as it was at the moment that the research was conducted. This story is time and space-oriented and is also primarily dependant on the collected data, the time of the collection, the participants in the research and the reflections of the researcher on them. Each one of the above features is, to a great extent, dependant on my choices. As Ball (1990) points out, “the important thing is that deliberate choices are made and that researchers consider the implications of their choices for the claims that can be made about the data collected and the kind of analysis that can be offered as a result” (Ball, 1990, p. 164). Thus, I am telling the story of a policy initiatives realisation in four HEIs, while the realisation is still in progress. The aim of the story is to represent the way the HEI and their participants think, act, interpret and adapt and how they

work within this 'change' viewed within the context of EHE reform. This change that was not an option and leaves no space for an alternative way, as the actors engaging with it are led to believe. Finally, this story of the policy initiatives realisation of the BP case, deriving from a discourse-based approach, aims to be part of the 'critical discourse analysis' tradition and to concentrate on the marginalisation of specific discourses within particular geographical and educational settings, on how these discourses construct a 'discursive reality' for the subjectivities and processes they promote and how they disqualify or disadvantage possible alternative cases. Moreover, this story will attempt to describe "the distal context – how it privileges some actors at the expense of others and how broad changes in the discourse result in different constellations of advantage and disadvantage, particularly within the Foucauldian tradition" (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 25) and also will aim to "attend to the multiplicity of meanings that attach to (and divide) the people, spaces, objects, and furniture that compromise its focus...and to the passion and politics that are inevitably woven into those meanings" (MacLure, 2003, p.12).

### **Discourse-based Research: Reflexive and Interpretive**

I shall now turn my discussion to the two main features of discourse-based research and analysis, which are its reflexive character and its interpretive representation. Reflexivity and interpretivism appear at two levels of the research process. The first level is concerned with the reflexivity of the researcher in relation to the topic under investigation, the researcher's relation to the topic and the decisions that were made for the data collection and analysis. This first type of reflexivity contributes to the acknowledgement by both the researcher and the readers of issues that influenced or guided the interpretation of the research context and the data analysis. It is a process vital for the conduct of discourse-based research. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) explain "discourse analysis pushes researchers to think carefully about their own research practices...which

means paying attention to 'the interpretive, political and rhetorical nature of empirical research' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. vii quoted in Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 83). Or in Holland's words, "reflexivity involves reflecting on the way in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes" (Holland, 1999 referenced in Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 83). For the present study, I presented in previous sections the reasons that led to my decision to undertake this research and I also tried to position myself as researcher within the context of the research topic.

The second type of reflexivity in discourse-based research moves beyond the context and content of the research field. It does not engage with the choices and influences which constitute the research process, but it is concerned with the way in which that process works as a discursive practice upon the researcher's subjectivity and consequently influences the representation of research and data. This second type of reflexivity is often disregarded within the writing-up and presentation of the research, regardless of its significance. In the present research, in order to tackle the challenge of this second type of reflexivity I chose to discuss the methodological, theoretical and analytical stances that this research takes on and the possible outcomes, contributions, judgments and/or misjudgements which my interpretations might cause.

For these two versions of reflexivity to be accomplished during the research process, the researcher has to acknowledge the fluidity and the uncertainty of the research he/she is undertaking, and of the data and their interpretation that support that research. In the following paragraphs I shall discuss issues around reflexivity and interpretive representation in conceptual terms. This will appear also as a discussion of the contributions, concerns and limitations that a discourse-based research and analysis entails. Moreover, in the following sections the same features will be discussed in practical terms as issues that arose during the data collection through qualitative methods.



The starting point of a discourse-based research and analysis is concerned methodologically with the acceptance of the social constructivist nature of discourse. Discourse and the language that is embedded in it construct practices and subjectivities and by doing so, construct the social reality in which these subjectivities and practices are produced. When researching discourse, then, the aim is not to present a 'reality', its 'problems' and its plausible 'solutions'. Research on policy discourse, such as that of the BP, does not consist of the identification of HE problems that the policy initiatives aim to overcome, but concerned with the way in which these 'problems' are constructed within the field of EHE and how policy initiatives when applied objectify these 'problems'. The researcher, then, does not search for a condition that is defined as social reality but rather for the features of what is perceived to constitute the social reality.

For a researcher to grasp what is perceived as 'reality', there are several references needed. For example, for the study of the BP policy's reality there is a need for a basic historical review of the policy process and of the policy elements that pre-existed in the EHE context. Then there is a description of the real content of the policy and the context in which it is intended to be realised. For this study, this is being realised through the presentation of the policy discourse as it appears in the official documents, the definition of the geographical space that the initiatives are aimed at and the discussion of the nature of the policy and the politics it entails within the various levels and stages of policy production and policy realisation. Seeing the policy discourse within a historical, cultural, political and geographical context supports the understanding of how discourses came to appear as they do and how they delimit certain possibilities for action and disqualify and/or prioritise certain subjectivities over others.

The next stages of reflexivity and interpretive representation are concerned with the way in which the researcher deals with the data, primary and secondary in this research, and how he/she engages with them. It is important to acknowledge again the subversive nature of discourse-based research and analysis, which

rests on the understanding that there are no true representations of reality, either on the part of the researcher or on the part of the researched subjects. What are being represented in this thesis are interpretations of the policy discourse by the interviewees and then my interpretation of what the interviewees said regarding that discourse. These issues will be discussed more fully in the section devoted to the conduct of the interviews. However, and following a discourse-based approach, I note here that the dialectical process that takes place in the discursive engagement between the researcher and the interviewees is primarily a knowledge production process. A discourse-based research and analysis

acknowledges that all reference to empirical data are the results of interpretation – there are no unmediated data – and incorporates an understanding of how the researcher, research community and society collectively play a role in the social construction of “knowledge” (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Hardy et al., 2001; Kaghan and Phillips, 1998 referenced in Phillips and Hardy, 2002, p. 83).

Unquestionably, the interpretations of the BP discourse offered by the primary data – i.e. data from the interviews – that support this study are of significant importance for the appreciation of the day-to-day realisation of the policy discourse initiatives. In addition, the discursive process that took place during the interviews demanded reflexive appreciation of the discourse from both sides, introducing both participants – interviewer and interviewee – to new threads of conceptualisation. Moreover, the interview dialectics took place as part of a voluntary engagement to a specific topic-oriented discussion. The infrastructure of these interviews consists of compromises, exchanges, understandings and misunderstandings, silences, fractions, frustrations and sometimes the appearance of a common place within which interviewer and interviewee have managed to communicate their message.

It should be noted that the researcher and researched subjects engaged in the interviews purposefully for the study of the BP policy discourse. The policy discourse is regarded as their first acknowledged shared concern, and also as the reason for their meeting and the subject under discussion. At another level it is the policy discourse that has also defined their position in the discussion, either as interviewer or interviewee. It is the existence and evolution of the policy discourse that generated and guided this research. Moreover, neither the interviewer nor the interviewee can claim to be placed outside or beyond the policy discourse. Thus, their interpretations and representation of the discourse are limited by the content and context of the discourse.

On the other side of the coin regarding the above argument lie the unlimited possibilities for the interpretation of the discourse. This research is one of them. Its primary aim, or the purpose of my engagement with this study, is to open the space of the BP policy discourse to the multiplicity of meanings and readings that can be offered. Nevertheless, the whole responsibility for the final interpretative representation of this study lies solely with me and it is bound to what Fine et al. (2000) describes as "our obligation is to come clean 'at the hyphen', meaning that we interrogate in our writings who we are as we co-produce the narratives we presume we 'collect', and we anticipate how the public and policy makers will receive, distort and misread our data" (Fine et al., 2000, p. 123).

The possibility that the interpretive representation of the data will be misread, deformed and perceived in both positive and negative ways is unavoidable, expected and opens space for further discussion. Nevertheless, it is beyond my ability and will to control such processes. It is important though, to state the position which I am writing and negotiating BP initiatives. My position rests upon the unavoidability of the BP realisation. It aims to challenge this condition by exploring the discourses that have constructed it. It aims to show how the construction of the 'other', e.g. US, Japan HE systems, as a threat produces coalitions within the European region and unifications towards commonly identified goals. It also aims to question how 'common' was the identification of

these goals and how 'voluntary' is the participation of the countries which were signatories to the BP in the process of altering the EHE.

The BP as a set of educational initiatives aims to alter the EHE systems towards a more unified model. It is a reformative process embedded in changes both structural and ideological. Its starting point and aim can be claimed to be the alteration of how HE is being perceived or was perceived till recently. My interest in the BP is linked primarily to its formative nature, and moreover to the fears and hopes that it has generated. The driving force of this research is not the fear of change but rather the fear over the direction of the proposed change. It is the fear that education is tending to become solely economic oriented, disregarding key principles within the educational process.

Finally, parts of the argumentation in the thesis might be regarded as a defence of elitist views on education, especially, when notions such as 'widening participation in HE' are being challenged. Through this research, my aim had never been to displace these notions and the ideas embedded in them from the HE discourse, but rather to reiterate their meaning as they are being relocated and used within the rhetoric of a different discourse than the one that originally introduced them.

## Policy formation

In methodological terms, the policy-formation aspect of the 'BP policy discourse', in this research, will be treated as the guidelines of the official regional education policy, and as part of the attempt to construct the EHEA. Silverman (1998) stresses that a researcher should pay early attention, when studying policy, to issues of 'historical', 'political' and 'contextual sensitivity'. The history of the BP, its politics and the context in which this education policy is being constructed will be examined through the presentation of the official documents. Understanding the historico-political and contextual issues is important, not only because the discussed policy initiatives have major implications for the EHE but also because the official documents as policy texts serve specific educational, political and ideological purposes. Hodder (2000) discusses methodologically the engagement with texts as data stressing that:

Equally, different types of texts have to be understood in the contexts of their conditions of production and reading" ... "As Ricoeur (1971) demonstrates, concrete texts differ from the abstract structures of language in that they are written to do something. They can be understood only as what they are – a form of artefact produced under certain material conditions (not everyone can write, or write in a certain way, or have access to relevant technologies of reproduction) embedded within social and ideological terms (Hodder, 2000, p. 704).

Official documents, in discussions of research methods, are regarded as 'secondary data', as the researcher had nothing to do with their construction and in this specific case, with their writing. The official documents that are used in this research as secondary data were collected through internet research. They were found on the official EU (eurunion, euredics, vvs, etc) sites, and also various internet search engines were used. The internet search provided me with an

amount of information that allowed me to define my exact research interest. This process, although useful was time-consuming as the amount of information was hard to manage and not always relevant to the specific issues of this research. However, as the attempt to create the EHEA is ongoing, the internet search is a vital element of this research, as it is the main instrument for following the evolution of the process.

The focus on the policy texts and their context of influence and production raises a valid question. Why were there no interviews with any of the policy's protagonists? This query gains weight as the 'behind the scene politics' related to the BP, played-out by the protagonists of the process are discussed in this thesis. A logical assumption would be that primary information derived from the founding actors of the BP would offer an insightful view of the infrastructural progression of the Process. The answer to this question lies in the primary concerns and interests of this research.

Consequently, the official documents within discourse-based research and analysis are regarded as the vehicles of the discourse. The author seems to carry less weight than the written officially publicised text. And in the case of the BP there is not a sole author, but multiple actors who contributed to the production of the final version of each written declaration. As shown previously, the production of the declarations was met with opposition, contradiction and compromise. However, this research is concerned with and interested in the discourse that these documents are embedded in and which is expressed and negotiated by the different actors. When engaging with the official discourse, the authors become one body, as they all have agreed and adopted the same document. When a concrete text is decided as being the representative statement of the author and becomes public, then the text is exposed to different interpretations.

Methodologically, the perspective on texts in this research follows the conceptualisation that different readers offer different interpretations of texts. Hodder (2000) captures this problematic as follows:

Words are, of course, spoken to do things as well as to say things – they have practical and social impact as well as a communication function. Once words are transformed into a written text, the gap between the ‘author’ and the ‘reader’ widens and the possibility of multiple reinterpretations increases. The text can ‘say’ many different things in different contexts. But also the written text is an artefact, capable of transmission, manipulation, and alteration, of being used and discarded, reused and recycled – ‘doing’ different things contextually through time. The writing down of words often allows language and meanings to be controlled more effectively, and to be linked to strategies of centralisation and codification (p. 704).

The official BP documents were written with reference to the wider European social spectrum. They are produced by and also they transmit a regional, European discourse for HE. But the range of influence of these documents does not rest solely at a regional level. On the one hand, these texts express policy initiatives and strategies that are aimed at the national and institutional level. On the other, they are seen in relation to, and reflect features of, globally located discourses. The interpretation of a text usually draws upon both the social context in which it was produced and to the relation of the text to the social context in which it is read. The multiplicity of readings that are plausible with regard to the official BP documents is not only embedded in the reader but also in the context where these documents can be read. A distinctive example of this derives from the data when the Dean of the Greek University (AEI) offers different readings as a Dean, as a European Rector, and as an academic. Finally, from the researcher’s point of view, both the reading and the

representation of the texts in this research are located in the social context in which they are located, produced and interpreted.

The next methodological step in the section on policy is the extraction of the main issues presented in the official documents and the suggestions, guidelines for changes or actions that have been taken for their accomplishment. The documents will be analysed using a 'policy sociology' model. According to a policy sociology approach it "is better to see policy as a process, something which is dynamic rather than static" (Trowler, 2003, p. 96). Ball (1994) defines policy as "both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (Ball, 1994, p. 10). For the analysis of the official documents I shall use discourse analysis as the main analytical method. I will primarily adopt a Foucauldian perspective on 'discourse' but also focus on the evolution of discourse as an analytical tool, especially as used in the works of Ball and Sheridan (1990), presented previously.

### **Policy Realisation and its Implications**

The second section on methodology is concerned with policy realisation at regional, national and institutional levels. The topic will be seen through the eyes of the participants in HEIs, as they constitute, as agents, the final cycle of policy realisation. Their views were gathered through semi-structured interviews in four HEIs. Two of those institutions are located in Greece and two in England. In particular, this research will look at participants' views in order to explore the effects of the discourse and the policy processes.

The attempt to observe the realisation of the Bologna targets within four higher education institutions becomes possible through interviews with the HEIs' participants, the micro-level agents. Their words, perspectives and understandings offer a glimpse into the practices of realisation of the BP initiatives. The convergence and divergences found in the four institutions at the



level of the policy realisation process can be described and discussed using Bagguley's notion of 'the agency of the insubordinates' (Bagguley, 1994, p. 74, quoted in Ball, 1997, p. 270). As Ball explains,

The prevailing but normally implicit view is that policy is something that is 'done' to people. As first order recipients 'they' 'implement' policy, as second order recipients 'they' are advantaged or disadvantaged by it... [However, I suggested that] policies pose problems to their subjects, problems that must be solved in context. Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localized and should be expected to display ad hocery and messiness. Responses indeed must be 'creative'. Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, offset against or balanced by other expectations (Ball, 1997, p. 270).

The above quotation presents an active exchange on the part of the agents affected by the policy towards the realisation of the policy. Such a conceptualisation of the space that policy texts allow at the level of practice, allows an appreciation of active, responses to policy agency at the micro level that would not be endorsed while discussing the policy as discourse effects. In contrast, at the level of policy as discourse there is an appreciation that demonstrates that policies are socially constructed practices defined by discourses that position and construct the subjects, in terms of space and time. Policy is regarded, in the context of this research, as dynamic, formed by and through social relationships between agents, institutional organizations, the state and the EU. Nonetheless, the power that policy exerts produces the normalization of the policy-affected subjects towards what is acceptable behaviour or thought, and is inscribed into the practices of policy realisation in specific historical, political and social

construction. However, on the one hand the multiplicity and plurality of discursive elements within the BP may present oppositional and contradictory possibilities in relation to the diversity of policy texts. On the other, any attempt for policy realisation on the part of the actors entails a considerable degree of creativity in the attempt to shape the policy in order to adapt to the context of its realisation. The dualism, policy as text and policy as discourse, offered by the policy cycle appreciation provides both the ability to describe how subjectivities are being constructed by the policy discourse and how agency is still present in the practices of realisation of the policy texts. Finally, my aim by using an understanding of education policy based on the policy cycle is not to overcome the tensions between structure(s), discourse(s) and agency at any level, but rather to concentrate on their exposure.

## Chapter 2: Content of discourse

By the term 'content of discourse', I primarily refer to the 'text of policy' as understood in Ball's conceptualisation, which was presented and discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 1). At this stage I will discuss how the BP, after its internal process of document/text production is examined, can be seen as a unified EU education policy. In addition, in this section, I make and support two claims: a) that the BP is a *policy* and b) that the BP is a *discourse*. Having set out my intentions for this section, I shall first briefly present the history of the BP, before moving on to its policy text production with reference to the specific major issues that are being addressed. The issues to which I will refer are: mobility, quality assurance, lack of competitiveness, lack of attraction, homogenisation/diversity in HEIs, educational market/public funding, readability and comparability, the system of credits, the system of cycles, ICT/lifelong learning and, finally, new countries entering the EU, mainly Eastern European countries. My aim is to present a picture of the EHE discourse as it is represented within the official BP documents.

### Official Bologna Process Documents

Attempts to create a common EHEA can be traced in the conventions for 'Academic and Professional Recognition in the EU and EEA'<sup>2</sup>. The first convention was 'The European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities' (Paris, 1953). This Convention 'establishes the principle of admitting students to universities in the receiving country on the basis of credentials that give admission to universities in the home country'. According to this document, European students were to be able to study in any of the European countries that had signed the convention. It was also agreed that their home country would recognise foreign degrees.

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<sup>2</sup> (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/naric/acar2.htm#European%20Convention>)

The second instrument to this end was the 'Diploma Supplement', which was introduced in 1988. The Diploma Supplement provided 'a clear description of the nature, level, content and status of the study that was pursued and successfully completed by the holder of accompanying qualification' (Ibid.). The usefulness of the Supplement was based on the idea that anyone who read it – employer, higher education institution et cetera –, would be able to appreciate the value of the qualification.

The idea for the composition of the Lisbon Convention in 1997 – the 'Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region'<sup>3</sup> (Lisbon, 11.IV.1997), which was supported by the European Council, the EU and UNESCO, was to replace and update the existing conventions. The need for a new convention arose mainly because of the continuing evolution of European education systems, which consequently made the comparability of European degrees more difficult. Interestingly, the aim of the convention was to 'emphasise the principle of fair recognition procedures and the acknowledgement of differences which should be accepted unless substantial differences in the courses are detected' (ibid.). This convention was intended to promote transparent criteria that EU member states could use for the evaluation of foreign qualifications. Finally, it was signed by member states of the 'Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe' and the 'Europe Region of the UNESCO' at a diplomatic conference in Lisbon in May 1997. The validity of the Lisbon Convention was defined as follows: 'it is expected that the required ratification by at least 5 countries will be a fact before the end of 1998, after which the Convention will come into effect' (ibid.).

As had been announced and expected after the Lisbon Declaration in 1997 four countries signed the Sorbonne Declaration on 25 May 1998 under the name of the 'Joint Declaration on the Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European

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<sup>3</sup> (<http://www.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/lisbon/converg.htm>)

Higher Education System'. The four countries were represented by their Ministers of education, who came from France (Claude Allègre, Minister of National Education, Research and Technology), Great Britain (Tessa Blackstone, Minister of Higher Education), Germany (Jürgen Rüttgers, Minister of Education, Science, Research and Technology) and Italy (Luigi Berlinguer, Minister of Public Education, Universities and Research). The declaration was conducted as part of the anniversary celebrations of the Sorbonne University. The main aim was 'to map areas of convergence between these systems (HE) in Europe (mainly EU/EEA), to identify trends affecting them and to indicate ways towards greater convergence in the future.' (Project Report, Executive Summary)<sup>4</sup>.

The need for the Sorbonne Declaration was based on the notion of 'challenges' coming from 'abroad' to EHE. These challenges could be overcome, according to the Declaration, by the creation of a common educational market that would establish and promote the autonomy of European universities. The main themes discussed in the Declaration are the structure (in terms of years and time limits) of HE and a compatible credit accumulation system for the evaluation of degrees, which would help mobility in relation to quality assurance. The lack of a quality assurance system to evaluate degrees from different institutions in different countries was seen as one of the major reasons for the low level of student mobility within EHEIs. As is described in the Project Report Executive Summary, the aim was:

[to empower] Europeans to use the new learning opportunities. Compatible credit systems, understandable degree structures, increased quality assurance and a more European labour market are structural improvements which would create a whole new range of learning opportunities for all; their impact would be even greater if they were combined with measures such as short master degree favouring new

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.unige.ch/cre/activities/Bologna%20Forum/Bologne1999/executive%20summary.htm>

types of mobility, the further strengthening of the NARIC/ENIC<sup>5</sup> network, counselling with a European dimension, and the elimination of remaining obstacles to student and teacher mobility (Executive Summary).

Just before the Sorbonne Declaration in May 1998, the French Minister of Education presented the Attali Report, (in full, 'For a European Model of Higher Education'), in which he discussed the future of French HE in relation to European HE. In this report, he proposed the 3-5-8 model<sup>6</sup> as a way to harmonise European HE. The closeness in time of the publication of the two documents, the Attali Report and the Sorbonne Declaration, led many countries to focus mainly on the model proposed in the Report and not on the two-cycle system proposed in the Declaration. This focus eventually created a misunderstanding concerning the relevance of this model to other member states' HE structures.

As Ravinet (2006) suggests, at that moment and before the Bologna Declaration had been articulated in practical terms, there was no BP infrastructure, at least in the way it is known and understood at present. For this reason, I find it of great importance to introduce some of the commentary documents on the Sorbonne Declaration and also the Lisbon Convention on Youth Policies and Programmes, as these documents highlight not only the European discourse but also set it in the context of global educational trends.

A few months after the Sorbonne Declaration, the 'Lisbon Convention on Youth Policies and Programmes'<sup>7</sup> was produced at the World Conference of Ministers

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<sup>5</sup> ENIC belongs to the Council of Europe and UNESCO network (European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility) and is a member of the European Union network NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres). <http://www.socrates.ee/en/enicnaric/enicnaric.html>

<sup>6</sup> In the Attali report, it is proposed that EHE educational and vocational degrees should be understood in terms of a first undergraduate cycle that will last at least three years and a second cycle that would last two years for a master's degree and three for a PhD.

<sup>7</sup> (<http://www.unesco.org/cpp>)

Responsible for Youth, which was hosted in Portugal by the Portuguese Government in cooperation with the United Nations. The Convention mainly focused on national youth policies, participation in society, development, peace, education, employment, health, and drug and substance abuse. In this way the United Nations, a global organisation, stressed its interest in youth and highlighted education and employment as the means for cultural exchange and peace between nations by the formation of citizens with an appreciation of global values.

The Project Report, 'Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education', was prepared as a background paper for the Bologna Forum and was written by Inge Knusden. The project was undertaken by the Confederation of European Union Universities Rectors' Conference and the Association of European Universities (CRE), and supported financially by the European Commission. As stated in the Introduction, 'the report comprises information on and analyses of current trends in higher education structures in the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area', and the main objective of the Project was identified as 'to provide an outline and overview of learning structures in Higher Education and a comparative analysis of the different systems embodying these structures, thereby offering a tool to identify possible divergences and convergences in the national and institutional policies'<sup>8</sup>.

The paper on 'Main Trends and Issues in Learning Structures in Higher Education in Europe' by G. Haug is the first part of the Project Report<sup>9</sup>. The version discussed here is the final revised version, issued after the Bologna meeting of 18-19 June 1999. The aims of the paper are stated as follows: 'i) to map main areas of convergence and divergence in the structure of the various systems and sub-systems of HE in Europe, ii) to identify trends in Europe and the

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<sup>8</sup> (<http://www.unesco.org/cpp>)

<sup>9</sup> (<http://www.vvvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/trends3.htm>)

global environment which may have an effect on these structures and iii) to indicate possible ways towards greater convergence and effectiveness in the future' (Ibid., p.2). Dr Haug discusses European HE systems from these perspectives, and identifies problems in all the areas mentioned. Specifically, these were the number of HE systems in Europe, the autonomy of the institutions, which was thought of as the means towards greater quality and competition, the varying duration of studies, the translation of qualifications to credits, and challenges from overseas. Finally, in section IV, he attempts to answer the question, 'what is the European Higher Education Space (EHES)?' He identifies four 'key attributes, which will also serve as guideline principles'. These are:

i) Quality: reforms concerning credit systems or degree structures cannot substitute for efforts to improve and guarantee quality in curricula, teaching and learning;

ii) Mobility: the most powerful engine for change and improvement in HE in Europe has come, and will come from growing awareness of alternative approaches and best practice in other countries;

iii) Diversity: measures not respecting the fundamental cultural, linguistic and educational diversity in Europe could jeopardise not only the progress already made, but the perspective of continuing convergence in the future;

iv) Openness: EHE can only fulfil its missions within a worldwide perspective based on competition and cooperation with other regions in the world.' (Ibid., p.22).

In this answer he remains close to the basic issues of EHE convergence but presents, in my understanding, a realistic and critical review of the idea. The



importance of the paper rests on the fact that it was both a follow-up to the Sorbonne Declaration and a preparation for the Bologna Forum.

The second part of the Project Report, 'Learning Structures in Higher Education in the EU/EEA Countries', written by J. Kirstein<sup>10</sup>, is mainly an overview of EHE structures with a precise focus on i) national frameworks for HEIs and the diversification of qualifications in official and non-official institutions and/or international/transnational and national HE qualification frameworks and structures, ii) access and admissions requirements, iii) quality assurance and accreditation/recognition procedures, iv) international credit transfer and recognition systems, v) organisation of the academic year, vi) tuition fee systems, vii) student support systems and, finally, viii) international student and career guidance systems. This part of the report was primarily descriptive in nature, providing the information base for the forthcoming Bologna Forum.

In the commentary documents, 'The Sorbonne Declaration – Follow-up and implications: A personal view' (by Andris Barblan, published 17<sup>th</sup> April 1999)<sup>11</sup>, Barblan mainly focused on the issues underlying the confusion and misunderstandings surrounding the Sorbonne Declaration. He emphasises the fact that 'the NARIC and ENIC centres deal with the external validation of academic learning but do not focus on the *effectus civilis* of the degrees awarded by higher education institutions. In other words they do not link intellectual power to employability – which is the political problem prevailing in a Europe weakened by an unemployment rate of about 10%' (p. 1)

The misunderstandings which he identified are a) the focus on the 3-5-8 model, which was regarded as irrelevant to some EU member states' HE structures, and not on the proposed two cycles; b) the word 'harmonise', although there is no mention of the harmonisation of content, curricula and methods - indeed, there is a focus on the need for diversity and the respect of national differences - and c)

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<sup>10</sup> (<http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/trends5.htm>)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/sorbone\\_follow\\_up.htm](http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/sorbone_follow_up.htm)

that the Sorbonne Declaration was an action for integration taken not by the European Commission but by the largest countries in the EU, which called on other member states and European countries to join. Finally, he stresses that,

...the Sorbonne process is a full change in aims and methods which implies new power balances among the social partners - at the expense of the established patterns of regulation controlled at present by public authorities and academic administration. The political stroke consisted in putting first the European area of higher education which is to be built in conjunction with the economic, financial or social aspects of the European space - not by accruing the existing development but by putting these aspects into a long-term perspective, which should help choose the most expedient ways to reach the goal of an integrated higher education system in Europe (p.4).

Barblan (1999) points out the political dimension of the declaration and relates HE explicitly to the economy and the European Economic Space.

In the annexe, 'The Sorbonne Declaration of 25<sup>th</sup> May 1998: What it Does say, What it Doesn't' (by Guy Haug)<sup>12</sup>, Haug refers to two issues, among others, which according to his personal interpretation are significant but which attracted little attention. These are the need for EHE to regain its competitiveness on an international scale and its relation to the labour market, from the perspective that EHE mainly focuses on 'qualifications' rather than on 'academic degrees'.

Finally, in 'The European Space for Higher Education' (by Kenneth Edwards)<sup>13</sup>, Edwards summarises the main issues of discussion on 18 June in Bologna. The document was presented to the Ministers of education before they signed the Bologna Declaration and focuses on 'the academic needs for European space for

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/trends4.htm>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/meeting\\_report.htm](http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/meeting_report.htm)

Higher Education' (p.1). The issues raised by the ministers were collaboration, mobility, competitiveness, readability, and credit recognition in EHE, in relation to the creation of a democratic European society, with participating citizens. They also referred to the creation of an inclusive EHE system of qualifications related to the labour market, which would additionally provide lifelong learning in the same labour market context. These features, it was argued, need to be primary characteristics of the EHE system, and the means for their achievement was located in the creation of a Common European Space for Higher Education.

The following step was the Bologna Declaration itself. The Bologna document has the official title 'The European Higher Education Area' and was signed by 29 ministers at the University of Bologna, Italy, on 19 June 1999<sup>14</sup>. The main points of the BP as agreed by the Ministers of education are the following:

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote the employability of European citizens and the international competitiveness of the EHE system;
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and postgraduate;
- Establishment of a system of credits – ECTS ;
- Promotion of mobility;
- Promotion of European co-operation over quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies;
- Promotion of the necessary European frameworks in HE, particularly with regards to curriculum development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research;

The meeting set a deadline of 2010 for the accomplishment of these goals. In the Bologna Declaration, the term 'Europe of Knowledge' is used. This refers to the means for the empowerment of European citizenship and the aim is establishing peaceful and democratic societies, which share the same values and belong to a

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/bologna\\_declaration.htm](http://www.vvs.ac/documentatie/bologna/bologna_declaration.htm)

'common social and cultural space'. This aim is also expressed in relation to the contemporary social and political situation in South East Europe.

Alongside the original document of the Bologna Declaration, an explanatory document<sup>15</sup> was written by the Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the Association of European Universities (CRE). They identified the main goals of EU HE policy as:

- A clearly defined common goal: to create a European space of HE in order to enhance the employability and mobility of citizens and to increase the international competitiveness EHE;
- A deadline: the European space for HE should be completed by 2010;
- A set of specified objectives: (see above, Bologna Declaration presentation, a.)<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the meeting in Bologna also stated that the model of EHEA policy initiatives is not 'unified', but 'specified' by each nation-state's education policy. According to this, the BP appears as a common education policy within the EU geographical area. The realisation of the process, which is allocated to each member state, needs to recognise of each nation's specific cultural, economic and social contexts.

Higher education plays a central role in the development of both human beings and modern societies as it enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship and ethical values. At European level, education in general and higher education in particular are not subjects of a 'common European policy': competence for the content and the organisation of studies remains at national level (ibid).

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<sup>15</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/erasmus/bologna.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [www.europedu.org](http://www.europedu.org)

Hence, the role of the BP is to create a common area in HE that will lead to the formation of the 'European knowledge society'.

Therefore, the Community has a complementary role to play: to add a European dimension to education, to help to develop quality education and to encourage life-long learning. All the recent European summits (from Lisbon 2000 on) underlined the contribution of education in setting up the 'European knowledge society'<sup>17</sup>.

Although in the Bologna Declaration the main motivation for the creation of a common European space in HE is economically oriented, the subsequent documents are more explicit about the cultural and social dimensions of the issue. 'Harmonisation', or rather 'convergence', is presented as the key factor in European economic growth and competitiveness with other countries in the context of globalisation.

In relation to policy text production, numerous follow-up documents can be identified as part of the BP, and I will examine some of these later. Here I shall focus on the documents of the official BP meetings, which have taken place every two years (four in total).

- a) **Prague Communiqué**:<sup>18</sup> 'Towards the European Higher Education Area', Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, Prague, 19 May 2001

The first BP Follow-up Group meeting took place in Prague, with the idea that 'the choice of Prague to hold this meeting is a symbol of their will to involve the whole of Europe in the process in the light of enlargement of the European Union

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<sup>17</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/higher.html>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Prague\\_communicuTheta.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Prague_communicuTheta.pdf)

'(ibid.p.1). The document reinforces the ministerial decision to promote and take further action towards the six objectives presented in the Bologna Declaration:

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles;
- Establishment of a system of credits;
- Promotion of mobility;
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance;
- Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education;

The ministers in Prague also emphasised and directed their attention towards lifelong learning, HEIs and students and, promoting the attractiveness of the EHEA. Finally, they arranged the composition of the Follow-up Groups. According to this, they decided that 'The Follow-up Group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time' (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p.3) and that the council of the European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe and the Council of Europe should also be represented.

The final statement on the eligibility of participants is significant, as during the Bologna meeting the above bodies were not included and this exclusion provoked some opposition. Even the European Commission was in the end excluded from the proceedings. Thus, the Prague Communiqué, as an official document, emphasises the social character of the EHEA and appears to be socially oriented in its attempt to establish an inclusive and democratic character within the Bologna proceedings.

- b) **Berlin Communiqué**:<sup>19</sup> 'Realising the European Higher Education Area', Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Berlin, 19 September 2003

In Berlin, the ministers stressed the importance of the social dimension of the BP and specifically declared that 'the need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility' (Berlin Communiqué, p.1). They also set 'intermediate priorities' for the following two-year period, 2003-2005, focusing on the promotion of an effective quality assurance system, having effective use of the system based on two cycles and the improvement of the degree recognition system. The Berlin meeting, started with the participation of the 33 countries that had signed the BP up to that point and ended with the acceptance of seven new members, thus bringing the total of countries participating in the Process to 40. The participating countries are both EU and non-EU members and are all represented in meetings. In addition, other regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), participated in the meetings as guests.

- c) **Bergen Communiqué** 'The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals', Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005

The Bergen Communiqué revised the recommendations on quality assurance, degree systems, the recognition of degrees and periods of study as discussed in Berlin. The ministers adopted an overarching framework of qualifications in the

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Communiqué1.pdf>

EHEA, and standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA as proposed by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA). The summarised views stated in these frameworks can be found in 'The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area'<sup>20</sup> and in 'European Quality Assurance Standards'<sup>21</sup>. Here the participating countries that had not yet ratified the Lisbon Convention are called upon to do so. Moreover, the interest of the ministers turned in Bergen towards the relationship between HE and research, meaning the relationship between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA). The Bergen meeting ended with 45 participating countries and the European Commission as a voting member of the Follow-up Group. The following organizations were added as consultative members of the Follow-up group: the International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the European Association for Quality Higher Education (ENQA) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations Europe (UNICE).

- d) **London Communiqué** 'Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to challenges in a globalised world' Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Bergèn, 18 May 2007

The London ministerial meeting has not been considered in the analysis of official documents, as this research had already reached its final stage.

- e) **Leuven/Louvain la Neuve Communiqué** 'The Bologna Process 2020 -The European Higher Education Area in the new decade' Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Leuven, 28-29 April 2009

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520\\_Framework\\_qualifications.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520_Framework_qualifications.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520\\_European\\_Quality\\_Assurance\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520_European_Quality_Assurance_Standards.pdf)



The next and final ministerial meeting of the BP is due to take place in Leuven/Louvain la Neuve in 2009.

Before discussing the presentation of the official documents produced biannually by the ministerial meetings, I shall first describe the progression of the follow-up meetings, from a supportive instrument in the first meetings to a significant factor in the development of the BP as a structured organisation (Ravinet, Euredocs 2006). The Follow-up Group mainly reviews the decisions and requests of the previous ministerial meeting and works towards the organisation of the following one. The first Follow-up group was established after the Sorbonne Declaration in an unofficial form, having, in the first instance, a primarily practical and organisational character. This came from the initiative of the Italian Minister, Luigi Berlinguer. The participants in the group were Italy, which hosted the following ministerial meeting, Austria, Germany, Finland, the European Commission, one representative from the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences and one from the Association of European Universities (CRE). The group met four times and, finally, not only set the agenda for the Bologna meeting, but also prepared the document of the Bologna Declaration. Moreover, its existence played a significant role in ensuring wider participation in the Bologna meeting. This was because many ministers from other countries perceived the proposal for HE as coming from the four most influential countries within the European context. On the one hand, these other states did not want to be left behind, but on the other they saw it as an authoritarian, demanding and controlling decision. The process of formulating the Sorbonne Declaration became a significant issue between the first four countries and the potential signatory countries, especially relating to the level of compliance and establishment within the EU framework and the level of participation and role of the European Commission. The role of the European Commission and its relation to the BP will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Ongoing research concerning the establishment of the BP as an institutional organisation (Ravinet, 2006) and its obscure organisational characteristics that set it both 'in' and 'out' the EU framework<sup>22</sup> (Racke, 2006) has shown that the European Commission was excluded from the first ministerial meeting of the BP at the initiative of the French and British education ministers, Claude Allègre and Tessa Blackstone.

The next follow-up group, namely the Bologna Follow-up Group, met again without any firm structural organisation, and there is no mention of it in the Bologna Declaration. However, the realisation of the importance of the Follow-up group and the need for its official organisation is apparent in the Prague Communiqué. It is most likely that the opposition that the Bologna Declaration faced, primarily from academics' and students' unions, as they were not included in the decision-making process, necessitated the creation by the Ministers of a body that would be inclusive and take into consideration other perspectives and opinions in order to minimise future conflicts. Thus, the Prague Communiqué confirms

the need for a structure for the Follow-up work, consisting of a Follow-up group and a preparatory group. The Follow-up group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time. The preparatory group should be composed of representatives of the countries hosting the previous ministerial meetings and the next ministerial meeting, two EU member states and two non-EU member states; these latter four representatives will be elected by the Follow-up group. The EU Presidency at the time and the European Commission will also be part of the preparatory group. The preparatory group will be chaired by the

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<sup>22</sup> The peculiar condition of the BP as established 'in' and 'out' the EU framework will be discussed in an elaborative way later on.

representative of the country hosting the next ministerial meeting (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p. 3).

Accordingly, the Follow-up Group would be responsible for the continuing development of the EHEA process, and the preparatory group would be responsible for the planning of the next ministerial conference.

In Berlin, the ministers entrusted the implementation of all the issues covered in the Prague Communiqué, the overall steering of the BP and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting, to the Bologna Follow-up Group, which was now composed of representatives of all member states of the BP, plus the European Commission and the Council of Europe, with the EUA<sup>23</sup>, EURASHE<sup>24</sup>, ESIB<sup>25</sup> and UNESCO/CEPES<sup>26</sup> as consultative members. The Bologna Follow-up group is convened at least twice a year, chaired by the EU Presidency and with the host country of the next ministerial conference as vice-chair. It was also decided that a board would be formed, in order to oversee work taking place between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. This group would also be chaired by the EU Presidency. Finally, the idea of a secretariat was introduced. The secretariat would support the work of the Follow-up group and would be provided by the host country of the next ministerial conference (Berlin Communiqué, 2003).

In Bergen, the ministers endorsed the follow-up structure set in place in Berlin, and also included in the meetings the participation of the Education International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) as new consultative members of the Bologna Follow-up Group (Bergen Communiqué, 2005).

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<sup>23</sup> EUA - European University Association

<sup>24</sup> EURASHE - European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

<sup>25</sup> ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO/CEPES - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation/  
European Centre for Higher Education

## Discussion of the Official Documents

Through the study of the official documents, it can be seen that various attempts to achieve mutual recognition of European tertiary degrees appeared after the European Convention of 1953 and the Diploma Supplement of 1988. The Lisbon Convention of 1997 on the recognition of qualifications aimed to replace all the previous conventions through more up-to-date proposals on the current structures of the European HE systems. These documents brought *mobility* to the forefront of discussions of EHE. Up to that point, however, the need for mobility was related only to the idea of a European community in which citizens would have not only the legal possibility of studying abroad, but also concrete support from the governments of the member states within the borders of the EU. The Sorbonne Declaration, signed by the ministers of education of Italy, Germany, Britain and France, built upon this idea of mobility by suggesting the creation of a common European Area of HE through the 'harmonisation' of the architecture of EHE structures. In the Declaration, the need for European mobility is related to economic factors, regarding the strengthening of the European economy in terms of competition within the global economic market. A year later, 25 countries followed the lead of the first four ministerial signatories of the Sorbonne Declaration by signing the Bologna Declaration. Mobility was the central issue, and accreditation and changes to the structure of EHEI were suggested to support it.

In Bologna, the 29 Ministers were also concerned with the attractiveness and competitiveness of EHE and its position in the global education market. In addition, tertiary education was regarded as the means for economic growth, for the creation of a democratic European society and for active citizenship. In turn, in the Berlin and Bergen communiqués, promoting *quality* was identified as the means for the establishment of an efficient HE system based on two cycles, and the improvement of the degree recognition process as the means towards increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHE. Thus, quality gained an important position in the discussions of the creation of the EHEA.

Quality was related to the competitiveness of EHEI in the context of offering labour-related qualifications to students who would eventually support the European economy, and to the attractiveness of these qualifications, as the means to draw students from other regions of the world.

The first steps towards the creation of the common area were taken with the formation of a system of credits, known as ECTS<sup>27</sup>, which would support the readability and comparability of tertiary qualifications and of a system of two cycles of study, undergraduate and post-graduate. The 'harmonisation' or 'homogenisation' of EHE structures would be articulated, and diversity would be left to the individual features of the curriculum and the characteristics of each institution. The educational market, 'internal' and/or 'external', would be reinforced in HE, as tertiary institutions would need to elaborate and develop their management and internal Institutional governance and at the same time they would need to attract students and other sources of funding to ensure their continuation. Thus it was anticipated that they would now pay more attention to evaluation procedures, updating the courses they offered to students and competing with other institutions within the EU. The realisation for the need for an evaluative mechanism that would support and serve the transferability and readability of the ECTS turned the focus of the BP towards EHE quality.

Finally, the idea of a common European space in HE targets not only member states of the EU but also other countries within the European geographical area. Moreover, if some EU member states had refused to accept the BP, this would have led to financial competition between the member states, as some countries do not charge fees for tertiary education. This would have resulted in a challenge to the basic idea of the EHEA: that Europe consists of a unified economic, cultural and social region that exists and works on a global scale. Moreover, the ministers realised that they should also call upon non-EU member states and

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<sup>27</sup> ECTS - European Credit Transfer System

ensure their participation in the BP. For this reason, the pan-European adaptation to and adoption of the unification of HE was secured through the presentation of guidelines for EHE policy by ministers of education rather than as a policy imposed on the countries by an official body of the EU, although the European Commission and the European Council had already embraced the idea before the Bologna Declaration was signed.

In the documents, mobility always appears as the key factor in the evolution of the economy and education: firstly, for the formation of a well-qualified labour force and, secondly, so that tertiary education should comprise a market in its own right, which would work without the restrictions imposed by state borders. Interestingly, only the Students' Joint Declaration as a BP follow-up document addresses the issue of the financial support that would be needed from the individual states to enable student mobility. The Students' Declaration also questions the main rhetoric of the changes, which is based on the understanding that EHE was lacking in quality, competitiveness and attractiveness. In addition, the students foresaw the formation of a 'new student elite' resulting from the lack of economic means of a large percentage of the student population, which would exclude them from taking advantage of and participating in mobility policies.

Barblan (1999) presents the process of creating an EHEA as political. The unification of EHE, mainly in cultural terms, would eventually provide not only economic stability but also secure peace, in a period when Soviet domination of the Eastern European bloc had come to an end and there was an ongoing war in South East Europe.

It can be claimed that quality and diversity work both together and against each other in the official documents and in the oppositional discourse. That is to say, the quality of EHEIs is considered to be important in order for them to attract students, mainly from other regions of the world, and diversity is important for the same purpose. Thus, in the Bologna Declaration, the ministers were anxious to reject the idea of uniformity of curricula content. However, when the discussion moves to mobility, diversity becomes a problem and the curricula need to be translated into credits for comparability.

This chapter so far is a presentation of the official educational discourse in its own terms as derived from the documents presented here. This discourse, 'the Bologna discourse', faced opposition from the inside, as expressed in the commentary documents. People involved in the attempt to create the common European space objected to issues related to the realisation of the BP, mainly seeking clarification or changes that would avoid future problems or unrealistic approaches. In order to accommodate possible objections, issues and suggestions, the BP was structured in a way that would allow the ministers of education to meet every two years and created follow-up groups of those meetings that would stimulate the process such as the Rectors' Follow-up Group and that of the students. These produced their own texts on the BP, focusing each time on a different aspect – political, educational or economic. Consequently, some of these documents act as commentaries upon, or clarifications of, official discussions, while others aid or stimulate the official process either at a policy level or at the level of realisation. However, not all the documents receive equal attention, or have been equally influential in the BP and policy articulation.

The need for clarifications started with the misinterpretation of the Sorbonne Declaration in which the four Ministers sought to homogenise EHE structure by dividing it into two cycles of studies, undergraduate and postgraduate, as opposed to the Attali report, discussed earlier in this chapter, in which a model of 3-5-8 – 3 years' undergraduate studies, 2 years' masters studies and 3 years' doctoral studies – was presented. This misinterpretation was the starting point for the discussion about which term would be most appropriate to be used for the description of the process: that of 'harmonisation' or 'homogenisation' of EHE. The intention for 'harmonisation' or 'homogenisation' of EHE was the rhetorical claim introduced only in a discursive way, based on political, social and cultural commonalities and differentiations within European countries, as the structures of HE were not going to be significantly changed but would follow the traditions of each country. However, the principle of the two-cycle model was already being acted on, changes in the curricula were suggested in relation to the needs of the labour market and the notion of quality appeared as part of the strengthening of EHEA against global competition in the educational and economic market. As Haug (1998) suggests, the principles for the achievement of the common EHEA are accepted as 'mobility', 'quality', 'diversity' and 'openness'. He also points out that the discussions focused on 'qualifications' and not on 'academic degrees'.



### **Official documents in the Bologna Process discourse**

At this point I will turn to a discussion of the official documents in an attempt to extract the basic characteristics of the BP and also to establish it as a discourse. For this reason, I shall continue the discussion of the official documents by focusing on the discourse of the BP and the subjectivities it aims to formulate. The documents, which are in the form of conventions, declarations, reports or commentaries, convey the BP discourse and thus they will be regarded overall as part of the official process. The discourse on EHEA is established through its realisation features, which include a) the participation of as many Ministers of education as possible, b) the production and performance of conventions and declarations and, finally, c) the acceptance of the discourse as guidelines for future educational policy and the active engagement in it by the participants. These features can be identified through the documents of the Process. Thus, in the Sorbonne Declaration, the four Ministers called on their European counterparts to participate, and in the Bologna Declaration they argued for an opening up of the EHEA to European countries that are not member states of the EU. Additionally, through the presentation of the documents, the number of meetings, participating actors and documents that constitute the so-called BP become apparent. These features establish the key sites of the BP policy discourse articulation, establishing it as the official, exclusive, and dominant discourse in relation to EHE. At this point, the Bologna discourse appears as dominant in the EU because of the extended participation of member states. In the official and commentary documents the number of participating countries appears as a response to the Sorbonne appeal. Although the immediate response from the EU member states can be seen in terms of their already existing economic and political cooperation, this argument has not been highlighted in the documents of the BP, leaving in this way an open space for the call upon non-EU member states.

At this point I will try to approach the BP using a Foucauldian discursive conceptualisation. This attempt should be seen partly in analytical terms, but more importantly as a way of viewing the official documents of the process with the goal of highlighting some aspects of the 'behind closed doors' decision-making and development of the process. The EHEA discourse controls what is true or false, and what appears reasonable or logical in the field of power which it brings into being. In this way the discourse orients and sets limits to what can be said in meetings, which bodies participate in them and what authority the participants and speakers have. This control is discussed in the following paragraphs through discursive procedures.

For the exploration of several procedures which operate in EHEA discourse, I shall introduce into the discussion Sheridan's appreciation of Foucauldian discourse (Table 2). According to Foucault, in Sheridan's translation of 'The Order of Things' (p.10-11), 'in any society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a number of procedures whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to mark the unpredictable event' (Foucault in Sheridan, 1990, p.121). There are four types of procedures, and each one of them is made up of several principles (see Table 2).

The first set of procedures is that of exclusion. As Ball describes them, 'discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when and with what authority' (1990, p.2). Procedures of exclusion are concerned with the 'what', the 'who', the 'how' and the 'authority' of what is said. Sheridan suggests that there are three different types of exclusion (see Table 1), which operate in different circumstances of discourse. Although this might be the case, I find it useful to apply all of them to the EHEA.

Table 2: Procedures of discourse

<b>Procedures of exclusion</b>	<b>Procedures that limit and control discourse:</b> discourse as irruption, as unpredictable events	<b>Procedures for the control of discourse:</b> a rarefaction of the speaking subjects	<b>4 Methodological principles</b>
<b>Prohibition:</b> sexuality and politics	<b>Commentary:</b> hidden meanings/ new discourse possible	<b>Ritual:</b> the qualifications required of the speaking subject	<b>Reversal:</b> event to creation
<b>Division and rejection:</b> reason and madness	<b>Author:</b> unifying principles in a group of writings, the source of their significations, the forms of their coherence	<b>Societies of discourse:</b> they preserve discourse by producing it in a restricted group	<b>Discontinuity:</b> series to unity
<b>Opposition between true/false</b>	<b>Disciplines:</b> it constitutes an anonymous system that is available to anyone who wants to use it	<b>Social appropriation:</b> how an individual can gain access to any kind of discourse	<b>Specificity:</b> regularity to originality
			<b>Exteriority:</b> condition of possibility to signification

The first type is that of 'prohibition', which is concerned with what can be said in the context of the EHEA discourse, by whom and when. As it appears the BP documents, different types of meetings were arranged (such as the meeting of the Follow-up Group in January 2000 and the meeting of the enlarged Follow-up Group in June 2000) in which different bodies were eligible to participate with different levels of authority in each meeting.

For example, meetings about the construction of the core documents of the process, for example the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration or the Lisbon Convention, were arranged within a time space of approximately two years. This time was used by the follow-up groups to have own meetings and to explore and present how the process was progressing. Some of the commentary documents are the results of these meetings. The follow-up groups varied in terms of who participated, whether they could be extended or not and their specification of certain issues each time. The outcomes of the follow-up meetings, which consisted of criticisms of and propositions and ideas relating to the realisation of the EHEA, were taken into consideration by the ministers in the core meetings.

The agenda of these discussions was arranged according to the type of meeting and the participants. Moreover, the ministerial meetings and also the follow-up groups were chaired by the country that has the EU presidency at that time. As Racke (2006) comments, 'As the Presidency steers the discussion and controls the agenda, it has considerable power to influence the direction of the process' (p.13). She continues, 'So there is no doubt that the EU (that is, EU cooperation, EU member states, the EU Presidency, and the EU Commission) has an important influence on the BP and that EU member states have possibilities to steer the process that non-EU countries do not have' (2006, p.14). On another level, what was said in the discussions needed to be attuned to the socio-historical, cultural and, most importantly, economic features of Europe and the HEIs which operate in this context. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the idea of a EHEA and its adoption by the education ministers of each country was a political decision based on the hope that in this way Europe would be able to overcome the internal regional problems that it was facing as well as external

economic threats. Anything outside this context of discussion was considered irrelevant and thus prohibited in the meetings.

In relation to 'division' and 'rejection', the second type of procedure of exclusion, the mentioning of prohibited issues is regarded as an interruption of the logic of the discourse on the part of the speaker who mentions them, who will be deemed to be not following the rationality of the discourse. This could apply to documents such as the Students' Joint Declaration, which were oppositional to the Process. In addition, the EHEA discourse was acceptable in relation to social, historical, cultural and economic considerations. The discourse preserved its own rationality and in the same way created the limitations on what it was possible to discuss or even to negotiate. An example of this could be the rejection of the word 'harmonisation' in the Sorbonne Declaration, because several ministers were opposed to it. A further example was the use of the concept of the 'diversity' of EHIs in the EHEA discourse, which was not compatible with the notion of 'harmonisation'. Consequently, its usage could have been considered as indicating irrational conflict.

Beyond the opposition between 'reason' and 'madness' as presented above, there is also the opposition between what is 'true' and what is 'false'. The EHEA discourse is not autonomous. It was created within the EU context or on the margins of it – a discussion of the relationship between the EU, the European Commission and the BP will be presented in Chapter 4<sup>28</sup> - that context provides and serves as its framework. In addition, other bodies external to it have a high degree of influence over educational policies or initiatives. These bodies, such as the OECD, the WTO or UNESCO, have their own discourses concerning education-related economic features, programmes or human rights, which orient

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<sup>28</sup> See the theoretical Chapter 4, section I) Regulatory mechanisms and policy technologies in the context of the BP

the EHEA discourse but also preserve its truthfulness. The numerous commentaries or explanatory documents also constitute a set of instruments that clarifies what is true and what is false in the discursive context.

The second set of procedures are those which 'operate from within discourse itself, classifying, ordering, distributing as if to master another dimension of discourse: that of discourse as irruption, as unpredictable event' (Sheridan, 1990, p.124). Discourse within a Foucauldian approach is never unified. It consists of different elements, features that in a way can work together, creating a centralising system of discourse, or as autonomous features creating other peripheral discourses in relation to or in opposition to the central discourse.

This set of procedures is identified by three different features. The first includes the 'commentary' documents of the discourse. I have already mentioned above that these documents mainly seek clarifications and explanations of the official documents. Examples are 'The Bologna Declaration on the European Space for Higher Education: an explanation, by the Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the CRE,' (2000) or the 'Students' Joint Declaration' (1999). These documents are important because they introduce issues which were either overlooked or merely implied in the official documents, and constitute feedback for the bodies that constructed the primary texts. They were prepared by different bodies, usually bodies that had an interest in the primary texts and wished to express their own specialised opinion or point of view, as is the case of the two documents mentioned above. In this way these different bodies, such as the CRE or the European students' union body, opened spaces for further discussion within the discourse by proposing explanations or alterations or by highlighting future problems, as Haug does (1999). The commentary documents, analysed while using a Foucauldian vocabulary, expose hidden meanings in the primary

text, they bring in new concepts and, by doing this, they open up the possibility of the creation of a new discourse, or new discourses, rooted in the primary discourse. As an example, the conceptual turn from the competitiveness and attractiveness of EHE as expressed in the Bologna Declaration to a more social oriented or social 'friendly' approach in the Prague Communiqué alters the focus of the process.

Consequently, the commentary documents, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, become as important as the primary, or official, documents. The authors are no longer important; the power of the document is based on what it expresses and its position within the document formation and defines the space of its possibility. In opposition to this argument, and by creating an interesting paradox, this is not always the case. Some commentary groups, or authors, create documents that are not appreciated to the same extent. An example of this is the 'Students' Joint Declaration' which was not positively received, as can be seen in the fact that it is rarely referred to in the primary or other documentary texts. The reason for this can be traced in the different principles that were used during the writing of the document by the students, principles which were not compatible with the principles used in the primary texts. One example is that the students challenged the ideas of a 'lack of attraction and competitiveness' of the EHEIs. In addition, they proposed the expansion of state funding at a moment when the justification of the EHEA in the primary texts was the lack of, and importance of attracting, private sector funding for EHEIs. Overall, it is evident in the Students' Declaration that the students engage in and promote a HE discourse embedded in the older 'welfare' approach to educational issues rather than the apparent 'post-welfare', Schumpeterian approach to the official BP documents. Thus, although the author may not be of great significance, the principles on which a document is based are what position the document in the discourse's context.

The third feature in this set of procedures is the 'disciplines', as defined by Sheridan as 'an anonymous system that is available to anyone who wants to use it' (1990, p. 126). A discipline includes the primary discourse and all the peripheral discourses related to it; that is, all the commentaries and other documents, statements and propositions. The limitations of a discipline are extended and all the notions and concepts of the discourse are introduced. In other words, it can be said that a system of communication, based on the language and words that are used in the discourse, is created, helping the participating bodies to promote their understanding of the discourse or, in contrast, excluding those who do not adopt the system of communication. Or as Christiansen et al. suggest, 'Treaties, directives and communications from and to the European institutions speak a specific and unique language which is often understood by a limited circle of insiders' (2001, p.15). The constructed discipline of the EHEA uses specific notions for its presentation to the participants and to the public. Additionally, these notions can, in academic terms, be identified as interdisciplinary because the EHEA discourse borrows terms from disciplines such as economics and management, education and social studies, and political philosophy.

This brings us to the discussion of the final set of procedures, those which are concerned with the control of the discourse. The first one, the 'ritual', is related to the qualifications that a speaker needs to participate in a discourse. Following on from the previous paragraph, a speaker needs to have an interdisciplinary academic knowledge in order to be eligible to participate in the EHEA discourse. Thus, the EHEA discourse is limited to political, academic and managerial bodies. These bodies create 'societies of discourse', which is the second feature of the procedure. Although there are several societies of discourse in the EHEA, with different interests and focuses, the discourse is restricted to a small sector of the population. Hence, the discourse appears to have its own mechanisms,



which preserve its substance and meaning from external influences. Moving to the third feature of 'social appropriation', the mechanism that preserves the discourse, this extends to limiting the possibility of access to the discourse, as it is open only to those who have knowledge and understanding of its notions and the authority within the participating bodies to express an opinion.

It can be said that the procedures presented above constitute a self-regulating mechanism of the discourse, preserving its existence but also regulating and positioning the subjects engaging in it. Discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak...discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1974, p.49). However, discourses are also social creations by subjects in the reality of text production. The existence of the discourse is embedded in its use by subjects.

The EHEA discourse was first introduced with the Sorbonne Declaration, a document signed by four Ministers. It introduced the first notions of the discourse such as 'harmonisation' and the 'architecture of EHE', which were the basis for the evolution of the discourse. This primary text produced a great deal of commentary and Follow-up documents and involved several EU member states. Additionally, this document began the breakdown of the primary discourse into the constructed sub-discourses that constitute it.

As mentioned previously, the commentary documents opened up the space for the introduction of new discursive features and uncovered what was only implied or not stated at all in the primary documents. The possibility of a new discourse might be limited as there were no entirely oppositional commentary documents, nor could they exist as this would threaten the discourse or even replace it with a new one. Because a document external to an 'official' discourse needs to follow the logic of the latter in order to be heard or appreciated, an author cannot overcome the restrictions that are imposed on what will be heard in the context of the 'official' discourse.

Discourse creates a system of communication to which not everyone has access. The real meaning of the notions of discourse makes up a specialised knowledge that is not available to everyone. Hence, those who can use the language of the discourse, even though they are created and positioned by it, also have the power to change the focus of the discourse or even to transform the meaning of its concepts by using their authority as people who have knowledge of it.

Further issues arose, however, as attempts were made to establish this discourse as 'policy'. Issues of realisation, recontextualisation and appreciation are at the forefront within the EHEA and the European states that accommodate it. I would like to conclude this section by answering my own query as to whether the BP can be seen and discussed as a policy and specifically as a unified, tangible EU education policy. As discussed in the presentation of the official documents, the BP started as an initiative of four countries and was later adopted by 29 European countries. However, the EU member states were not at any point obliged to participate in the process, or to adopt it. In addition, the BP in a way retains the characteristics of an initiative, as there are no legal obligations imposed on the signatory countries. Interestingly, readings on Rumanian higher education and other East European countries set the reform of national HE systems in order to adapt to the BP guidelines as a main prerequisite for their application of EU membership. Moreover, new EU member states, such as the Czech Republic, have already signed the Bologna Declaration. Thus, even though on the surface the Process appears to be optional, non-obligatory and based on national choice, it is actually a significant unspoken requirement of EU membership. Therefore, my understanding of the BP is that it is a policy, and moreover an EU education policy, considering the extent of the European Commission's participation in it. Again, this relationship will be discussed further in the following chapter.

However, at this point I should refer to arguments about the BP that wish to see it not as an EU policy but as a European process or policy initiative. The distinction

rests on the fact that non-EU member states have adopted and signed the process. Even though this is true, until now the non-EU member countries that have been included either had established a Socrates-Erasmus system before the BP or had signed other EU and European educational documents. For example, in Prague it was stated that 'Ministers welcomed new members to join the BP after applications from Ministers representing countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open' (Prague Communiqué, 2001, p.3) and, in Berlin, 'Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the BP in their own systems of higher education' (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p.8). In Bergen the Process was opened up to the wider world, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) organisations had already been participating at the meetings as visitors. The Communiqué stated that 'The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world' (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p.4). The above statement makes clear that the intention of the BP is not solely European but works for the enlargement of the HE market in which the EHEA will be competing.

The logic of declaring the BP as 'European' because of the geographical location of the participating countries can be then challenged on the basis that Bologna at this moment aims to expand beyond European borders. In the context of facilitating and ensuring the mobility of European students, the BP has moved to the construction of the Erasmus Mundus for the mobility of international students also as part of the initiatives towards attractiveness. Still, the argument stating that the BP is European and not EU is based primarily on politics within the EU itself. The role of the European Commission at this point is significant as within a period of a year it promoted and funded not only the Ministerial conference in Bologna but also the Follow-up Group reports. As I have already mentioned, the European Commission was excluded from the process during the Bologna

meeting, as the Ministers aimed at an educational transformative process in which European countries would participate but would not bind the members to an EU structure, so as to avoid any loss of sovereignty by the signatory states. Finally, the BP is constructed on the margins of the EU framework and is not bound by it. However, the way that the Process facilitates its procedures, for example the work of the Follow-up and Preparatory groups, and the Board and the Secretariat, are closely related to the EU presidency, which shows a non-linear and controversial but also vital relationship with the EU. In addition, the European Research Area (ERA), which holds the vast majority of funding for research conducted within the EHEA, is funded by the EU. For these reasons and others that will be discussed in the following chapter, I will make the decision to see the BP as an EU policy with European – the usage of the term is geographical here – and, possibly in the near future, global dimensions.

In relation to how solid it is as a policy, I will have to go further into the internal structure of the BP. The Process is officially characterised as a 'set of guidelines' which are adopted by the signatory countries, EU member and non-EU member states. Each state is said to have the responsibility for their realisation of these guidelines according to their own national and educational contexts. However, the number of documents related to the BP, either on a regional or a national level, point to the fact that it is not simply a 'set of guidelines' adaptable to any national context. As guidelines, they set out a structure for EHE according to which the national character of HE is altered, compromised or compressed. Having said that, I should present a balanced perspective on the argument by referring to the point made by Kehm and Teichler (2006, Unpublished paper) that national policy agendas can be found to have a 'contaminating' disposition with regard to the BP. By this, they appeal to the fact that some national HE policy reforms, in order to gain status, be promptly accepted and/or avoid or tackle possible oppositions, are presented as if they were part of the Bologna guidelines, dissolving in this way the EHEA initiatives. As an example, they discuss the Norwegian case, in which 'a national reform agenda ('the quality

reform') was attached to the BP in a way that both reform processes became intertwined and are seen as a single undertaking' (Kehm and Teichler, 2006, p. 7). However, as will be shown and discussed extensively in Chapters 2 and 3, the national agendas and the Bologna initiatives discussed by Kehm and Teichler are not completely unrelated or disconnected and perhaps a more macro-oriented approach that would also consider global HE policy trends could offer a different perspective.

In conclusion to this basic presentation of the official documents, I hope I have highlighted the main issues, sketched the nature of the BP and justified to an extent my preference for discussing it both as an EU policy and as a policy discourse.

## **Part B: Discourse as a Theoretical Tool**

In this second section I will discuss i) the content of discourse and ii) the concept of discourse as a theoretical tool. This discussion will be realised through the conceptualisation of discourse in relation to my research on the BP. Thus, in the first section I will attempt to illustrate how features of the BP discourse connect with features of the discourses of globalisation and higher education policy in the EU member nation-states under research. In the second section, I will show how the notion of discourse theoretically offers the possibility of tracing current changes and policies in higher education.

### **Chapter 3: Content of discourse**

#### **The Globalisation Discourse and Education Policy**

It is only through first engaging with and discussing the discourse(s) of 'globalisation' and 'globalisation and education' that it will be possible to conceptualise and theoretically discuss the BP discourse. This is because one of the primary features of the BP, during its establishment, was its role as an EU regional response to threats from external global market-related competition.

Firstly, I shall start the discussion on globalisation discourse by outlining the context in which it arose, focusing on the education-oriented aspect of the 'knowledge economy'. I will then survey different definitions or understandings of the term, before examining the 'globalisation and education policy' discourse, in order to see how aspects of globalisation influence current education theory, research and policy. Finally, I shall bring to light the 'demand/response' character of the relationship between globalisation and the BP discourse by highlighting their conceptual interconnection.

## **Section 1: Globalisation and the 'Knowledge Economy'**

The discourse of the 'knowledge economy' emerges as the distinctive link between globalisation and the Bologna Process. My discussion of the 'knowledge economy' discourse aims to consider and explore the effects of globalisation on a regional higher education policy and consequently on national higher education policies. The relationship between the global, the regional and the local in higher education is a core concern of this research, with a view to exploring the role of new technologies of governance and the neo-liberal influence on education policy, as global pressures affect local policies. These issues will be discussed in the following chapter. However, in order to approach them I shall start with a discussion of globalisation, as its multiple effects frame all of the above issues of concern.

In an attempt to pin down globalisation within current HE policy I shall focus on the 'knowledge economy', and in particular the emergence of the knowledge economy discourse within the global education policy field. Specifically, I will start with a brief discussion of the definition of the 'knowledge economy' (KE) and look at the way it appears as a global educational factor of immense importance focusing on the role of multilateral organisations. In this way I will move to a discussion concerning the global higher education policy field and its relationship to multilateral organisations. Finally, I shall try to unlock the 'knowledge economy' rationale as a hopeful scenario for economic growth based on human capital formation. Within this spectrum I aim to trace the role of HEIs within the KE discourse.

### **“Knowledge Economy”: The Concept**

The concept of the ‘knowledge economy’ currently underlies most aspects of global, regional, national and local education policy. Interestingly, for a relatively newly introduced term<sup>29</sup> within not only the field of policy but also the broader educational field, KE has generated an extensive literature, deriving from various theoretical appreciations or ideological positions e.g. post-modern, Neo-liberal, Third Way (Delanty, 2003). However, when the term is used, it is not always clearly defined, an issue that causes various concerns, as Guile, emphasises. For Guile, the lack of extensive theorisation of the nature of the term ‘knowledge economy’ has led to “not only theoretical incoherence but also to educational policies and practices that are often contradictory” (Guile, 2006, p. 355). The lack of a precise definition suggests that “is one of the many imprecisions that make the notion of ‘knowledge economy’ so rhetorical rather than analytically useful” (Keith 2002 quoted in Brinkley 2006, p. 3).

However, several attempts at definitions are currently being made by various national, regional and international agencies, each one focusing or rather prioritising in their definition certain aspects of the KE, especially those that are more relevant or closer to each agency’s motives and interests. For example, the Work Foundation (WF) in the UK has published a Report titled “Defining the Knowledge Economy”, according to which “the knowledge economy is what you get when firms bring together powerful computers and well educated minds to create wealth” (p.3). The underlying aim and interest of the WF, as identified in the report, is the possibility of overcoming the lack of a concise definition that would be able to facilitate the quantification of KE features or, as is stated in the report, “in other words, do they allow us to measure in a robust way through

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<sup>29</sup> ‘Newly’ here refers to the term ‘knowledge economy’ itself. However, the features and ideas embedded in the term can be traced earlier, e.g. in the mid – 1980s in Charles Handy’s work (Handy, 1984).



national and international statistical and survey data the knowledge economy, the knowledge workforce and the knowledge-based firm?" (p. 3).

A different appreciation of the term focuses upon the changes initiated in educational systems due to the pressure for forms of knowledge and types of skills that will facilitate the KE. A summarised description of this approach derives from Hargreaves (2000) who lists these currently demanded attributes presented in an OECD report.

meta-cognitive abilities and skills - thinking about how to think and learning how to learn; the ability to integrate formal and informal learning, declarative knowledge (or *knowing that*) and procedural knowledge or (*know-how*); the ability to access, select and evaluate knowledge in an information soaked world; the ability to develop and apply several forms of intelligence...; the ability to work and learn effectively and in teams; the ability to create, transpose and transfer knowledge; the ability to cope with ambiguous situations, unpredictable problems and unforeseeable circumstances; the ability to cope with multiple careers - learning how to "re-design" oneself, locate oneself in a job market, choose and fashion the relevant education and training (Hargreaves, 2000, p.74).

Hargreaves focuses on the description of the learners, workers, citizens within the KE and how they should manage or utilise their present knowledge, skills and abilities in the most effective and efficient way, but also on how they should build their character around the continuous search for and acquisition of new knowledge, skills and abilities. My appreciation of a definition of the term as utilised in this research would be rather differentiated from both the above. I find the first definition by the WF too simplified to capture the processes and ideas that lead to or introduce the 'knowledge society'. In contrast, the second definition constructed by Hargreaves, while it presents the main features of the knowledges and attributes within the KE discourse, does not connect them with

overall political, ideological and finally educational trends implied in the knowledge society.

Consequently, I would suggest that the KE discourse illustrates the economic shift from low-skilled industrial production to knowledge-intensive production and services, described as the shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist to a Sumpeterian society, featuring transnational flows of capital, ensuing global competition and the dominance of information (Castells 2000, Brown & Lauder 1996). In social terms, the notion of KE as the basis of the knowledge society introduces not only a new way of conceptualising the relationships between the state, society and economy but also alters these relationships, as appears in current global, regional and national HE policies. The primary recognisable shift is the move from the conceptualisation of a strong state economy to support the education system as a part of a social welfare ideology to that of an education that aims to facilitate the economic development of the state within a neo-liberal ideological context. In more concrete educational terms, that shift is introduced with the demand for a knowledge-intensive highly skilled labour force, international mobility of brains, emphasis on lifelong learning, the transferability of skills, knowledge and competences, and finally overall knowledge management, introduced above by Hargreaves at the heart of policy rhetoric.

### **Multilateral Organisations, the State and Education Policy**

Moving on, I will attempt to trace the notion of the 'knowledge economy' within the educational perspectives of three multilateral and intergovernmental organisations which include the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). UNESCO, the IMF and DfID in the UK are not excluded on the basis of differentiated ideological position, but rather due to the time and space restrictions of this research.

My argument draws upon the idea that the World Bank, the OECD and the WTO have gained a powerful and exclusive position within the current global political scene and have established their institutional perspectives as of the greatest significance, gaining the position of decisive global actors in education policy. As Lingard et al. argue, “the structure, scope and function of educational policy have changed with the attention paid to the role of education in economic growth and innovation by these agencies (multilateral organisations)” (2007, p. 760) In order to discuss and elaborate on this perspective, I shall start by looking individually at each one of the three organisations’ educational approaches in relation to the KE, and conclude with an overall view of their ideological foundations.

#### ➤ **The World Bank**

The World Bank’s appreciation of the KE becomes clear while focusing on the role of the HEIs in the attempt to realise the former. The role of HEIs is described as critical “in supporting knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and the construction of democratic, socially cohesive societies. (World Bank, 2002, p. 23). The way in which HEIs are called upon to fulfil this role is located in their need “to respond effectively to changing education and training needs, adapt to a rapidly shifting tertiary education landscape, and adopt more flexible modes of organisation and operation” (ibid).

The World Bank proposes that a significant part of the economic development of a country – developing or developed – relies on its educational output within the spectrum and limits of the KE. HEIs are expected to host, mobilise and realise the changes in education with the support of the state. The World Bank suggests that this should take place under the umbrella of a National Innovation System (NIS). In such systems, efficiency ensures the greatest educational outcomes with low-cost investments, and effectiveness provides for the accomplishment of the targets set within a regulated and specified time framework and the desirable quality. An NIS is a web made up of the following elements: a) knowledge-

producing organisations in the education and training system, b) the appropriate macroeconomic and regulatory framework, including trade policies that affect technology diffusion, c) innovative firms and networks of enterprises, d) adequate communication infrastructures, and e) other factors such as access to the global knowledge base and certain market conditions that favour innovation (World Bank, 1999).

The aim of a NIS is, on the one hand, human capital formation and, on the other, the establishment and improvement of democracy and social cohesion. The crucial factor for both is investment in HE. Considering the formation of human capital, the Bank promotes widening participation in HE, provision for lifelong learning and the establishment or consideration of the international recognition of the qualifications that HEIs provide. The latter aspect on the improvement of democracy within a knowledge-based society is that HE will inflate to their students' values that will form them into responsible citizens, who aim to create greater social cohesion<sup>30</sup> as a result of education.

Within this understanding, universities are seen as facilitators of the KE as global institutions that should be responding rapidly, efficiently and effectively to the emerging international market in higher education. The efficiency and the effectiveness of universities within the global HE market should be regulated and measured for the benefit and assistance of both students/clients and business/clients. What is therefore needed, according to the World Bank view is Quality Assurance mechanisms for the evaluation and accreditation of HEIs' programmes, and new modes of organisation, operation and management of the form and character of these institutions.

Another interesting aspect of the way in which the World Bank aims to facilitate the move to a KE-based society is its plan "develop a digital knowledge base that

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<sup>30</sup> For a critical discussion on the relationship between social cohesion and education utilising data from multilateral organisations see Green et al. 2006

can be accessed by developing countries to aid their progress” (Lauder et al., 2006, p. 39). As this plan is still in a primitive stage, not much can be said about it. Yet it raises significant questions a) for both the content and type of information that will be selected, filtered and distributed by the World Bank, b) concerning the relationship of the World Bank and developing countries and also the conditions that these will have to agree to in order to use such a database, and c) related to the broader complexity that lies in the usage of the words ‘knowledge’ and ‘information’. My first point of concern follows from the question of who has access to knowledge or information and the limitations of this access. My second derived from the politics that underpin aid offered to developing countries, as it has been argued that “the World Bank offers funds to developing countries conditional upon their satisfying certain demands. These demands are consistent with neo-liberal ideology and are known as Structural Adjustment Programmes” (Lauder et al., 2006, p. 39). My final point is generated as part of a broader discussion of the similarity and difference of the signifier of the words ‘knowledge’ and ‘information’, and will be elaborated later on in this chapter.

### ➤ **The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**

In the first instance, a similar approach to that of the World Bank can be traced within OECD documents, for example:

OECD analysis is increasingly directed to understanding the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy and its relationship to traditional economics, as reflected in ‘**new growth theory**’. The growing codification of knowledge and its transmission through communication and computer networks has led to the emerging of the ‘**information society**’. The need for workers to acquire a range of skills and continuously adapt these skills underlies the ‘learning economy’. The importance of knowledge and technology diffusion requires better understanding of knowledge networks and ‘**national innovation systems**’ (OECD, 1996).

The OECD is clearly one of the most influential global actors in the promotion of the KE discourse, and furthermore in the development of education policy, particularly in HE. However, research shows that the OECD's influence on national HE policy varies in different countries. The work of Henry et al. (2001)<sup>31</sup>, for example, is an apparent example of strong OECD influence in the national HE policy field, but its influence, albeit to lesser extent, can also be traced in the UK, New Zealand and the European region (Peters, 2001).

The OECD ideas embedded in the KE discourse are structured around the promotion of lifelong learning, educational indicators and outcomes, widening participation, the introduction of education, and specifically HE in a global economy and a global competitive market, and the aim to promote equity, justice and social cohesion through the individual choices of a responsible and educated population. Undoubtedly, the focus of the OECD has always been upon education and it is not surprising that the KE discourse has been developed as one of the most powerful strains of rhetoric.

The major concern, regarding the above, lies in the implicit ideological and political presuppositions according to which the organisation produces reports, policies and research and under whose umbrella they are operated. It has been argued (Henry et al. 2001, Lauder et al. 2006, Rizvi and Lingard 2006, Lingard et al. 2007) that even though the OECD has a far more indirect influence upon national education policies than the World Bank and the WTO, it still effectively promotes a neo-liberal account of economic globalisation. How and why multilateral organisations are appearing to promote neo-liberal policies in education will be discussed in the following section, where I will try to outline the global education policy field.

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<sup>31</sup> For a closer and elaborated view on the work of Henry et al. 2001 see following sections.

### ➤ **The World Trade Organisation**

The WTO consists of 146 members, and its main decision-making body is operated by the Trade Ministers of various countries. The headquarters of the organisation is in Geneva, although the ministerial meeting is held biannually in different places. However, Robertson (2006), while researching the way in which the WTO operates at the level of decision-making, concluded that there is a significant imbalance in power among the participating members.

Many of the less developed economies are not able to participate in the decision-making processes that will directly affect them. As a result, the majority of the developing countries never make it either to the circle where agendas are set in the WTO, or participate in decision-making processes where they are able to reflect their own interests. This is partly because the important decisions are made in informal negotiations, and also because many of the less developed countries are unable to maintain a presence in Geneva, or at the various meetings running up to the Ministerial meetings (Robertson, 2006, p. 264)

The WTO is promoting at a global level the liberalisation of trade and aiming at the liberalisation of markets, and is significantly entering the area of HE. Its interest in higher education policy becomes clear through the commercialisation or marketisation of higher HE due to and through the introduction of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). GATS aims to expand global trade agreements within and between higher education and private providers. This expansion is beginning to have an immense impact on HE funding, autonomy and research orientation. Oosterlinck (2002) claims that the wisest decision for higher education policy would be to accept the reality of GATS and start discussions toward its implementation so as to avoid polarization.

Robertson and Dale (Robertson and Dale 2003, Robertson 2006) have developed a body of work on the way in which the WTO operates through GATS in relation to higher education and education in general. Article 1.3 of the GATS agreement constructs an ambiguity concerning which parts or levels of education which might be opened up to the global educational trade market. The article indicates that “services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority,” supplied on a “non-commercial basis,” and those “not in competition with other suppliers” are excluded from GATS. However, there are few countries without a mixed public-private system, and the question of how GATS would deal with the distinctions among public, private non-profit, and for-profit institutions remains without resolution. Moreover, Robertson (2003) stresses the concern that “it is not clear the extent to which compulsory education is exempt under Article 1.3” and Vanlathem (2003) discusses the controversy raised at a global level between the WTO GATS application and UNESCO’s<sup>32</sup> ‘Education for All’ programme.

Robertson & Dale suggest that ‘in essence, the WTO can be regarded as a means of constituting neo-liberalism, making it potentially more powerful than any other international organisation or organ of global governance’ (2003, p. 16) and Rikowski also states that GATS ‘seek[s] to transform educational services into internationally tradable commodities’ (2004, p. 572). The arguments of the WTO, and also the World Bank and the OECD, and the promotion of a neo-liberal account of educational services are of significant importance in this research and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Moreover, the Trade Ministers responsible for the WTO decisions represent their states’ interests. And Robertson explains in her research that ‘many states – though not all in the same way and not all for the same reasons – are at least willing if not eager players in the WTO processes, as they seek to advance their own national interests in the global knowledge economy’ (2006, p. 242).

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<sup>32</sup> Unites Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



## **The Global Higher Education Policy Field**

The exploration of the global education policy field cannot be extracted from the analysis of ideological foundations or perspectives of the multilateral organisations that inform it – such as the World Bank, the OECD and the WTO – and this is where I shall now focus the discussion.

Even though it cannot be claimed that the multilateral global agencies discussed above fully coincide, what is widely suggested is that, in broad terms, they all work to promote and influence higher education policies relying on and utilising in most cases the same or similar conceptual frameworks. In the case of the 'knowledge economy' the multilateral organisations also share a similar economic framework, often referred to as the Washington Consensus.

Williamson explains, in an article aiming to clarify the confusion surrounding the use of this term that he first used Washington Consensus 'as a summary of the lowest common denominator of policy advice addressed by the Washington-based institutions (including the World Bank)' (Williamson, 2000, p. 251) However, the subsequent use of the term altered its meaning. Thus it now signifies 'neo-liberal or market-fundamentalist policies (Ibid.)'. The importance of the Washington Consensus in the global higher education field is that it promotes what Peters calls "the neo-liberal project of globalisation" modelled by the world policy agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank and which 'predominates in world policy forums at the expense of alternative accounts of globalisation' (Peters, 2003, p.362).

Within the logic of economic globalisation, which according to Bourdieu's (2002, 2003) later and more political writings, is synonymous with neo-liberal policies, education is perceived not only as the means for economic development – at the state, regional or global level – but also is asserted to be part of a global liberal

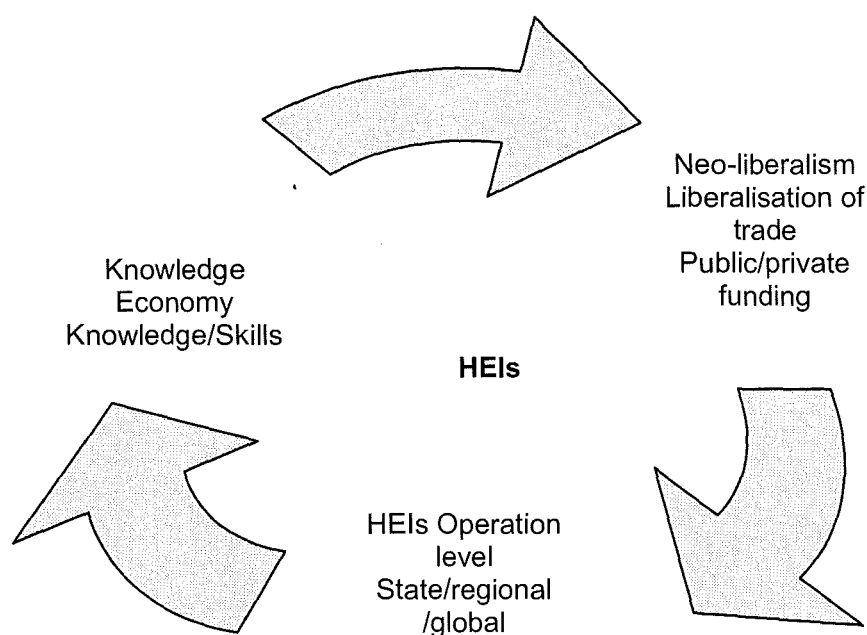
market as a service that individuals need to utilise for their own development and profit. Education is no longer a public service offered to the citizens of a state, but rather it is the citizens' responsibility to be educated for the economic development of the state. This appreciation of education fostered by economic globalisation and the Washington Consensus is implanted in the current higher education policy trend, as expressed through the notion of and call for a knowledge economy. The basis for educational innovation towards the knowledge economy 'involves a fundamental rethinking of the traditional relationships between education, learning and work, focusing on the need for a new coalition between education and industry' (Peters, 2003, p.364), as expressed in the multilateral organisations' policy documents.

The assertion of the link between education, national economic development and national competitiveness can be seen as a born-again version of human capital theory (Coulby, 2002). Additionally, as Guile suggests, this link has been given a new twist in recent UK and EU educational policies. In both cases the concept of the knowledge economy has been deployed in two senses: 'as a vision of future economic activity and as a rationale for lifelong learning policies' (Guile, 2006, p. 364).

In conclusion, as it appears from this discussion, it can be claimed that multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, the OECD and the WTO increasingly have significant discursive power to frame the global higher education policy field at the level of policy trends and policy formation. However, within the processes of the policy cycle, the states and their national higher education policies are not totally dominated, although undoubtedly, 'it is through the nation state that globalising practices seep into economies' (Currie et al., 2003, p. 7). Most of the time, it is state ministers or state representatives that participate in the multilateral organisations' decision-making groups.

## Higher Education Institutions in the Knowledge Economy

The 'knowledge economy' discourse holds a central position within neo-liberal education policies at a global level, which influence the regional and national policy levels. Such neo-liberal policies push for the intensification of the production of graduates that will fit the labour market and contribute to economic development. The position of HEIs within the KE education policy discourse is based on a three-point interaction cycle between i) knowledge and skills as the products offered by the HEIs, ii) the field in which each HEI operates at state, regional and global level, and iii) the ideology that supports the KE discourse and its aim, namely neo-liberalism and the liberalisation of trade in education.



The scheme changes the discursive position of the HEIs when the variables alter from knowledge to skills, from the state to the regional, or the global operational level of the HEIs from public funding to private. In an industrial, Fordist society, the three interrelated variables of the cycle were stable. HEIs aimed at the production and transition of knowledge to a labour force that would serve the state where they were located. Thus they were primarily publicly funded institutions. However, this relationship is altered within the knowledge society. HEIs are called upon to operate not only on a national but also on a regional and global level. They recruit, train and educate students who will be part of a global labour force. Finally, their relationship with the state is weakened, as the latter is not perceived as their sole or major funding body. A further part of the KE discourse calls upon HEIs to construct a closer relationship with industry, both at the level of the skills that are demanded in the market and at the level of financial provision. The growing complexity of the relationship between the three variables introduces uncertainty and a move towards competitiveness, excellence and performativity in the way that HEIs operate. Finally, as it will be discussed in the following chapter (4), the cycle of the KE discourse has implication for HE institutional governance.

### **The Knowledge Economy as a Hopeful Scenario**

The KE discourse is pervasive, powerful, plausible and persuasive. The term KE, even though often undefined, offers a way forward at a time of structural fragmentation and economic transformation. That is, the concept of a 'knowledge economy' symbolises the next stage of economic evolution, moving on from the industrial-based to the information-based economy. The realisation of this new type of economy is facilitated through advanced ICT, the extended use of the internet as a home-based facility, the accumulation of economic, cultural and political globalisation, and, of course, the opening up of networking, lobbying and information exchanges within and between national, regional and multilateral agencies.

It can be claimed that in the world of economies and markets, the 'knowledge-based economy' is a scenario of hope and perhaps a break from previous economic inequalities. It is a scenario that demands work, investment and patience, but promises economic growth and excellence within global competitiveness.

This scenario is worked with other terms including those of 'knowledge society' and 'knowledge capitalism' that have been introduced to describe and refer to different aspects of the societal structure. Moreover, the KE economy as a hopeful scenario of economic growth facilitated by a re-born theory of human capital incorporating the notion of 'lifelong learning' (Guile 2006, Peters, 2001). Within the KE economy discourse, lifelong learning is understood as imposing the responsibility on the individual for his/her personal, educational and career development. The responsibility then of the state or regional and international agencies is to assist individuals in their educational choices by providing information on the quality of each HEI and course of study.

## Section 2: Theorising Globalisation

It is challenging to extract and describe the establishment of 'globalisation' as a discourse. The current understanding and usage of the term, as outlined in Lingard and Rizvi (2000a) and Burbules and Torres (2000), place its origins in the 1970s, when the passage from Fordism as an economic model to post-Fordism occurred. That period is characterised by the beginnings of 'transnational economic transitions' and 'economic restructuring' in parallel with attempts at 'the implementation of neo-liberal policies in many nations' (Burbules & Torres, 2000, p.5). It was also the time in which transnational organisations as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Economic Community (EEC) - now European Union (EU) - , came into being. Although the rise of globalisation, in the present understanding of the term, can be traced to the 1970s, it should be noted that the World Bank was formed at the end of the Second World War at Bretton Woods and was the first international organisation with a global economic interest. This was followed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which "was established in 1961 evolving out of the Organisation for European and Economic Cooperation (OEEC) funded under the Marshall Plan for the economic reconstruction of Europe" (Henry et al., 2001, p.8). Alongside the rise of globalisation on the economic level, are the influences that these developments had on other fields of social life and in particular those of politics, culture and education.

Porter and Vidovich (2000) comment that "globalisation is a complex concept used with increasing frequency but often with different meanings by different commentators who may be focusing on different dimensions" (Porter and Vidovich 2000 p.449). In addition, Robertson and Khodker (1998) suggest to those researching the wide field of globalisation that "the necessity is to display as fully as possible the extent of the complexity before we begin to engage in

practices of simplification... we should begin with the task of complexification before we engage with the task of simplification" (Robertson and Khodker, 1998, p. 27). From this perspective, I will present several definitions of globalisation in an attempt to portray the multiplicity of ideas connoted by the term, and also to highlight its various elements. For example, these can be the virtual space of the internet, the collapse of time and space restrictions, the consequences of global trade and the rise of international corporations. I will highlight the interrelated procedures and phenomena that arise in these areas. My adoption of such an approach is based on the idea that globalisation is a 'discourse'. It is something that lies at the abstract level of understanding but has the ability to arrange and rearrange, form and reform, position and identify whosoever or whatever exists within its field. I shall return to this issue in a more elaborated way in the following section (B. ii)

Hay and Marsh (2000) identify the complexity of globalisation in their claim that "there are multiple processes of globalization, that these interact in specific and contingent ways, that such processes are unevenly developed over space and time, are complex and often resisted and, moreover, that they are simultaneously social, cultural political and economic" (Hay and Marsh, 2000, p. 3). Culture, politics and economics are the three commonly identified spheres of globalisation or rather these in which phenomena are identified as a consequence of the globalisation process. Waters (1995) defines it as "a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding" (Waters, 1995, p. 3). Thus the explanation of globalisation is located in the time-space relation and dimension. Waters, like many others, identifies three fundamental arenas in social life in which globalisation can be traced:

- a) the economy: social arrangements for production, that is, mainly material exchanges which, in relation to space, tend to tie social relationships to localities

- b) the polity: social arrangements for the concentration and application of power, mainly political exchanges which, in relation to space, tend to tie relationships to extended territories
- c) culture: social arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of symbols (and their representations), mainly symbolic exchanges by means of communication which, in relation to space, liberate relationships from spatial references (Waters, 1995).

And again, the significance of time and space is described in his words as follows: "the liberation of time and space is an entirely modernising development because it allows the stable organisation of human activity across vast temporal and spatial distances – it is a prerequisite for globalisation" (Waters, 1995, p. 49). The collapse of temporal and spatial distances is probably the most significant feature of globalisation, based mainly on the extended use of telecommunications, especially the Internet or Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and the easier and faster movement of people and goods. Although there is a common understanding of the significance of the time-space dimension, which for me constitutes the central point of reference in the globalisation process, there are different appreciations of it by different theorists.

The time-space dimension of globalisation is also discussed as the significant feature of both high modernity and post-modernity. For example, Giddens (1990), referring to modernisation, calls the process of time-space elimination 'disembedding', describing in this way "the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across time and space" (Giddens, 1990, p.21). Giddens sees globalisation as part of the evolution of modern society. Globalisation appears as a social mechanism, based primarily on economic and technological exchanges, which overcome time/space limitations, calling for 'high trust' and creating a 'high risk' situation for those who engage with it.



Moving on, Harvey (1989) sets globalisation in post-modernity. He introduces the term 'time-space compression'. In his words:

I mean to signal by that term processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves. I use the word 'compression' because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speeding-up the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us (Harvey, 1989, p. 240).

An example of the idea of compression that Harvey introduces is the stock market in relation to the Internet, as economic transfers can be realised by the participating individuals through a computer without their being present at any particular time and/or place. In education, time and space compression has occurred through virtual 'distance learning' courses, and students can even gain officially recognised degrees by studying alone in their homes and without engaging in university life.

### **State and Globalisation**

Globalisation puts pressure on the sovereignty of the nation state. Carnoy (2000) asks, "is the power of the national state diminished by globalisation?" (Carnoy, 2000, p. 46). Following Castells' conceptualisation (Castells, 1997, referenced in Carnoy, 2000), Carnoy presents a dual answer. On the one hand the answer is 'yes', because the state focuses more on economic policies that will allow it to remain an active participant in the global economic arena rather than concentrating on the evolution of the domestic economy and social welfare. Additionally, in order to accomplish the above tasks the nation-state takes decisions that conform to international financial interests rather than those of 'workers and consumers'. On the other hand, the answer is 'no', as "national

states still greatly influence the territorial and temporal space in which most people acquire their capacity to operate globally and where capital has to invest" (Carnoy, 2000, p. 46). Or, as Waters claims in relation to transnational practices and the nation-state, "the nation-state is 'the spatial reference point' for them, the arena within which they intersect" (Waters, 1995, p. 26). Morrow and Torres (2000) also adopt Castells' position: "while global capitalism thrives, and national ideologies explode all over the world, the nation-state, as historically created in the Modern Age, seems to be losing its power, although, and this is essential, *not its influence*" (Castells, 1997, p. 243-244, quoted in Morrow and Torres, 2000, p. 37).

In relation to education, the primary role of the state, the formation of 'citizens', has not been changed. What have changed are the characteristics and the processes by which the new 'citizens', as 'Global' or 'European', are formed. Following Althusser's conceptualisation, education constructs identities, based on the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) as it is one of its main mechanisms. Or in Foucauldian terms, subjectivities will be produced and positioned by the current dominant discourse that articulates educational experience. The role of the state on citizen formation has not changed, but is differentiated in relation to "the modality of the state control of education and the relation between the state and the market, and the state and the social" (Whitty, 2003).

Moreover, the alteration in the mode of state control over education is the point at which globalisation and Third Way or Neo-liberal Ideology influence education. As the dominant discourse is changing on all levels of the social sphere, economic, political and cultural, educational discourse is repositioned. In addition, the state has less control over discursive change as it is also positioned by it. As Kwiek suggests specifically in relation to Higher Education (HE), 'higher education issues may seem to it [the nation-state] to be of secondary importance' as the nation-state itself needs to find its place in the new global environment (Kwiek, 2001, p. 36). As Rizvi and Lingard (2000) remark, "while talk of the end

of the state is misleading, it is certainly the case that globalisation has given rise to a new spectrum of policy processes that are filtered through multiple regional and global political networks" (Rizvi and, Lingard, 2000, p.423). The European Union is the expression of this idea, as a regional and global political network based on the need to face the challenges arising from globalisation and the market. Within this context, markets, as force working at a global and regional level, come to fill in the gap which is created by the state's withdrawal from the state educational space. I shall return to this in Section C.

### **Globalisation and the Education Policy Discourse**

At this point I will examine how the globalisation discourse arose and became dominant. As concluded in the section above, markets are taking a significant space within education. The latest trends in the sociology of education and education policy research focus on the idea of 'markets and education' (Dale, 1996), 'markets in education' (Marginson, 1997) or 'education markets' (Ball, 2003). For me, the term used each time to describe the situation also suggests the perspective that is taken on the issue. In relation to the first term, 'markets and education', the two features are treated as parallel and equal in the influence they have on each other. The second term prioritises the educational area and identifies the existence of markets in the educational field. I will follow the third term, 'education market', whose acceptance in my view demonstrates that education has already become a market. In this way, education policy will be understood within the context of its creation. I will address policy more directly below. For example, Gerwitz et al. (1995), Whitty et al. (1998), Ball (2003) and Power et al. (2003), and others examine the trend on education market.

The marketisation of education is very clear within recent HE reforms, particularly those that took place in Australian HE (Lingard and Rizvi, 1998; Henry et al. 2001; Vidovich, 2004) in the US and New Zealand and finally, in the European

education reform that is the focus of this research. The main objectives of these reforms are HEI competitiveness, quality in relation to evaluation and assessment, the creation of a highly qualified labour force and the attraction of new educational consumers, such as students and research funders from the private sector, thus shifting part of the cost of HE funding from the state to HE consumers.

In HE research, these issues appear through the usage of the concepts of 'governance', 'managerialism', 'academic capitalism' and 'entrepreneurialism'. Although used extensively, these terms are still quite 'young' in the analytical and conceptual sense. Deem (2001) discusses two methodologically different research projects on higher education in order to examine the effectiveness of concepts newly adopted by social theorists for the discussion of HE changes. She focuses on the definitions of four concepts: a) globalisation, b) internationalisation, c) new managerialism and d) entrepreneurialism. In the overall discussion concerned with the usefulness of these concepts, she adopts a positive position, as long as they are well defined in relation to the context or the perspective in which they are being used.

In addition, Slaughter and Leslie (2002) discuss the notion of 'academic capitalism'. In their book, the term is used "to define the way public research universities were responding to neo-liberal policy that treated higher education policy as a subject of economic policy" (Slaughter and Leslie, 2002, p. 57). Nevertheless, they argue that although higher education institutions are surrounded by a market-focused discourse, they do not constitute a traditional or conventional market. The peculiarity of the HE market is based on the abstract, permanent and power-embedded features of 'the product', which are vocational qualifications, scientific knowledge or social status.

Part of the HE marketisation process is the expansion of administrative jurisdictions in relation to an institution's operations. This expansion is introduced

in HEI research under the term 'governance'. Interestingly, the current trends of governance in HEI are inspired by models which derive from the private sector. It seems that there is a shift in the governance of HEIs from academic staff to administrative staff. However, Boer (2002) points out that "academics are (still) in the position to constantly question the legitimacy of institutional policies, which might seriously delay policy implementation... and hold essential information for meaningful decision making" (Boer, 2002, p. 119).

Mignot-Gerard and Musselin (2002) conducted a large-scale study of French universities to examine the hypothesis that academic leaders are now expected to act more as managers as a result of increased institutional autonomy. Their research examined an example of what is taking place within a context of general HE education transformation due to current global HE trends, on the basis of neo-liberalism and Bologna European reform. France is an example of another European country in which there are changes relevant to those in the countries under research in this thesis. They focused their research on two existing groups of authorities in French HEIs: a) the president of the University 'team', which includes the president and the administrators and b) the dean's 'team', which includes the dean and the academics. According to their conclusions, the former team expresses "a voluntaristic and interventionist discourse" and "the latter still promotes the traditional role of *primus inter pares*" (Mignot-Gerard and Musselin, 2002, p. 124). Hence, it is not the power of the academics that is weakened or changed but rather that another 'team', the administration, is gaining strength, mainly in order to facilitate the university's adaption to the institutional market. The crucial point that Mignot-Gerard and Musselin identified was that the increasing differences between the two teams in terms of their 'intentions and decisions' could lead to obstructions within the institutions. Whether this is also the case for English and Greek institutions will be discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 5, Analysis).

The reality of the education market, which is expanding throughout the educational systems of 'the west', is a phenomenon arising from the processes of globalisation. The interaction between the education market and globalisation may go a long way to explain current education policies. For example, the 'BP', which is an EU higher education policy, is presented as a reaction to globalisation, and justified as the means by which the EU will respond to economic competition from the US and the Far East. I shall be dealing with this issue extensively in the following chapter. Before I move on to an examination of education policy issues, I should like to stress the point made by Tikly that "much of the more recent, groundbreaking educational literature on education and globalisation focuses on Western industrialised countries and their 'significant others', i.e. the newly industrialised countries of the Pacific Rim. This raises questions about the relevance of this work for understanding globalisation and education policy in countries on the periphery of the global economy and politics" (Tikly, 2001, p.151).

Yelland (2000) focuses on the effect that supranational organisations have on education policy. Specifically, he presents recent reports from the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in which the organisation frames global higher education policy in the context of internationalisation. Yelland considers the relevance of several national higher education policies to the proposed OECD guidelines, but concludes that national policies are still very much concerned with and focused on 'domestic demands'. Also, he relocates the question of relevance as "how relevant are national policies in a context of globalisation" (Yelland, 2000, p. 301), focusing in this way on the role of the nation-states, which need to reorganise HE transformation in response to global requirements. As Rizvi and Lingard explain, "the financial markets now decide which are the right policies and which are not. Markets now define the parameters of politics as neoliberal economists exert an unprecedented amount of influence in shaping public policies, as countries everywhere look for ways to compete and increase their share of the global export market. In this way,

globalisation is redefining the role of the nation-state as an effective manager of the national economy, public policy and national cultural development" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2000, p.423). Whilst these two points, 'domestic demand' on the one hand and 'globalisation as national policy manager' on the other, may appear in the first instance as contradictory, within a closer appreciation are not. The focus on domestic demand that Yelland describes is clearly evident. However, lately, nation states appear to face the same challenges deriving from globalisation. In that sense, every national policy focuses on domestic issues, but these issues appear as a common challenge for every state. The 'domestic' is defined in terms of globalisation as a local or national problem.

Whitty points out that a consequence in recent years there has been a "considerable congruence in the policies in many different countries" (Whitty, 2004). The globalisation process sets the same problems for different countries, and the policies which result are aimed at one specific direction, that is, to fulfil the requirements of globalisation. Social theorists concerned with policy have identified the idea of policy 'borrowing' or 'copying' (Whitty, 1993, Halpin and Tronya 1995, Dale, 1999). Researching policy borrowing between the U.K. and the USA, Whitty and Edwards explain that "policy makers in both countries were working with similar frames of reference and producing parallel policy initiatives, rather than directly 'borrowing' policies from another" (Whitty and Edwards, 1993, p.166). Halpin and Troyna (1995) have heavily criticised education policy 'borrowing' as cases of 'expediency and careerism' by politicians and policy makers. Finally, Dale (1999) discusses policy-borrowing in relation to the mechanisms of globalisation. Hence, in his words, "as a mechanism of policy transfer the key features of policy borrowing...are that it is carried out *voluntarily* and *explicitly*, and that its *locus of viability is national*. It involves *particular policies* that one country seeks to *imitate, emulate or copy, bilaterally*, from another. It is the *product of conscious decision making*, and *it is initiated by the recipient*" (Dale, 1999, p.10, emphasis in the original]. Moving forward, Dale identifies five mechanisms of policy making which derive from globalisation

appropriate for research, which are '*harmonisation*', '*dissemination*', '*standardisation*', '*installing interdependence*' and '*imposition*'.

On the other hand, Dale's approach, although it may explain how policy may be formed on a global level, does not elaborate a framework for understanding of policy. In the end, policy appears as the product of global and regional non-homogeneous processes. As he explains, "Globalisation is not a homogeneous process, nor are its effects homogeneous. As well as operating through different stands, it is associated with three quite distinct forms of regionalisation (in Europe, Asia and America) which themselves generate and mediate different policies and mechanisms" (Dale, 1999, p. 3). For researching a global and regional context, Dale's notions could be useful as they focus specifically on the cultural and political dynamics of nation-states.

Beginning with education policy 'borrowing', Levin (1998) tries to identify similarities and divergences between the directions that education policy has taken in the USA, Canada and the UK. He stresses that the education policy framework is largely defined:

- a) by economic features
- b) by large-scale criticism of schooling,
- c) by the reduction of state funding and the subjection of schools to private funding.

In relation to the policies themselves, he identifies three more characteristics, which are:

- a) the advanced authority of schools in relation to advances in autonomy and parental engagement,
- b) the creation of a market like commodity in the educational field,
- c) the extended need for accountability and assessment.



He concludes that many countries present similar features in their education policies but these features here have nothing to do with traditional 'borrowing' – a term used in comparative education for education policy adaptation from one country to another – as "particular bits are taken out of a country's approach and adopted elsewhere as if context did not matter" (Levin, 1998, p. 138). Thus he describes current education policy trends as a 'policy epidemic', and suggests that the way to talk about it is to focus upon the agent of the 'virus', the host and the environment as much as the conditions of its appearance, time, space and participants.

Australian academics have shown a special interest in the changes in their national higher education context and the impact of globalisation on education policy. To a degree, similarities within education policy due to the impact of globalisation are identified in their research and writing, especially in Porter and Vidovich (2000) and Vidovich (2004).

Porter and Vidovich 2000 suggest that "it is possible to see a number of common themes internationally in the reactions of higher education policy to globalisation and its impact on changes at the institutional level" (Porter and Vidovich, 2000, p. 456) Some common features are: the state budget reduction when HEIs expand in the areas of initial and life-long learning, the increase of private sector funding, the commodification of knowledge, ministerialisation, performativity, quality, managerialism, and a preoccupation of education policy discussions with higher education finance issues and the role of universities within this context. Nevertheless, Vidovich (2004) stresses that "elements identified by Rhoades and Sporn as common to United States and Europe are recognisable in both Australia and New Zealand quality policy text, although they are not identical...However, it must be emphasized that as all of these national policy texts evolve over time, the notion of a 'global model' can be misleading, and even

become a self-fulfilling prophecy promoting policy homogenisation" (Vidovich, 2004, p.353)

Moving on to policy research, the cultural, economic and political issues of nation-states are also of great importance. That is because "education reform is being conducted within contexts with different histories, different constitutional and administrative arrangements, and different political ideologies" (Whitty, Sociology of Education session). Thus, in order to understand education policy and the reforms that are being proposed and realised, there is a need to relate education policy to the current political and economic situation on global, regional and national scales. As Ball stresses, "one basic task (then) is to plot the changing ideological, economic and political parameters of policy and to relate the ideological, political and economic to the dynamics of policy debate and policy formulation" (Ball, 1990, p.8). Within this context I shall continue in the following section (B.i.c) with a description of the globalisation discourse in relation to the Bologna discourse.

### **Globalisation and the Bologna Process Discourse**

At the end of the previous section I discussed the impact of globalisation on national education policy and presented the argument that the latest trends in national education policy, especially for higher education, exhibit great similarities. I also have outlined in the previous Part A the context of this research, in which the BP will be treated as a common European policy in higher education. Hence, in this section I will bring together these two issues by focusing on the similarities and controversies within the two discourses, that is, the globalisation discourse and the BP discourse, always in respect of education policy.

In tracing the influences of globalisation on education policy may be plausible following Lingard and Rizvi's (1998) argument on the issue in their research on the impact of the OECD in Australian higher education:

We suggest that talk of any direct impact of globalisation on higher education is fundamentally misleading because, in the construction of policy, globalisation works as an ideology just as much as it refers to direct empirical effects (Hall and Harley, 1995). Thus, governments argue that certain policy developments are the only possible options in response to global imperatives. This is a hegemonic policy device, because the way in which policies are stated "creates" their contexts and already frames problems in particular ways (Seddon, 1994). Increasingly, globalisation is a constructed policy context for policy development in Australian education. In focusing on the OECD and higher education, we wish to show how this policy development is mediated by certain ideological discourses of globalisation promoted by the OECD (Lingard and Rizvi, 1998, p.258).

In addition, these authors suggest a dual understanding of the notion of globalisation, according to which globalisation is both a 'process' and an 'ideological discourse' (a discussion of these two terms appears in the following section B.ii.a). It is also in the acceptance of globalisation as an ideological discourse and not only a process that the similarities and divergences of different current national education policies can be understood, even though they are all presented as reactions to globalisation. Vidovich (2004), discussing Green's (1999) comparison of education policies in Europe and East Asia, explains: "He found a relatively consistent ideology in education policy across different countries and regions, even those with different historical and cultural backgrounds, which might suggest that the ideological component of globalisation is transcending 'traditional' ideological differences between

countries and perhaps accounting for the accelerating rate of policy transfer around 'the globe'. However, Green also found strong evidence of differentiated structures and processes that were related to different national and regional contexts. Thus, both policy convergence and divergence were occurring simultaneously" (Vidovich, 2004 p.353).

Now turning to focus on the BP, it is a policy-making process and as such is embedded in the discourse that creates and constructs it. In other words, the BP is embedded in the ideological discourse of globalisation as much as it is constructed with a view to respond to it. Moreover, the EU, which is the organisation that supports the BP as a policy-making process, is a supranational organisation, the discourse of which is expressed through institutions that are not tied or bound to any national boundaries within its specified geographical space. It works within the context of globalisation and constructs, promotes and influences the discourse of its member states' education policy. The relationship and dynamics of globalisation in relation to the EU as a supranational organisation can be seen in parallel the dynamics of the OECD in relation to globalisation as described by Henry et al.: the OECD "is both a globalising agent as well as being shaped in its turn by globalisation" (Henry et al., 2001, p. 59).

I shall now present the similarities and controversies of the two discourses, mainly as shown by how they appear in BP-related documents and in the EU approach to education. As previously mentioned, (Part A) the BP was established as a Ministerial proposal for the convergence of European higher education Institutions (EHEI). The European Commission then adopted and supported this initiative, following its long-time promotion of the Bologna agenda on European higher education. Novoa (2000) has conducted interesting research into the discourses and rhetoric that arose within the official Commission documents on education, specifically higher education. Although his research stops before the signing of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations, his description of the rhetoric on EHEIs is valid. He identifies three main discourses:

a) the economic logic, b) the rhetoric of citizenship and c) the discourse about quality.

Specifically, in relation to the economic logic, Novoa describes the political context of the neoliberal orientation according to which “educational policies are being reconstructed around ideas of ‘choice’, ‘standards’, ‘competencies’, ‘European values’ and ‘real knowledge’ as a way to legitimise the growing pressure to make the perceived needs of business and industry into the primary goals of the school” (Novoa, 2000, p.41). This description presents an economic approach of the EU following the exact line set by economic globalisation. Within the ideas of ‘European values’ and ‘competency’ arises the rhetoric of citizenship. European citizenship is embedded in discourses of responsibility and citizens trust in the EU, and in the adoption of an EU identity that would be based on labour flexibility and consequently, life-long learning, competitiveness, continuous evaluation, mobility and, above all, an EU with public social characteristics. Bringing into the discussion the results of the French and Netherlands referenda on the EU constitution<sup>33</sup>, a first appreciation would be that people do respond exactly that way. The French and Dutch denial of the EU constitution was merely an expression of disappointment and lack of trust because of the reduced level of social characteristics in EU policies and the expansion of marketisation, not only in education but also in most spheres of social life.

To return to Novoa’s appreciation, the discourse about quality has recently been dominating in European education policy. This discourse starts with the discourse of competitiveness in a global educational market. Interesting in this

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<sup>33</sup> Czech Republic – cancelled; Denmark, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom – postponed; Ireland, Sweden – date not set; Luxemburg – Yes (57% of 88% of the population attending the election) and Spain – Yes (77% of 42%); Finland – parliamentary decision expected in the second half of 2006; Austria, Belgium,, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia – accepted through parliamentary decision; France – No (55% of 69%); Netherlands – No (62% of 63%)

respect is one of the Commission's latest reports, dated 11 May 2005, which was produced as a contribution to the BP ministerial meeting on 19-20 May 2005 in Bergen. With this report, the Commission alerts the European Ministers to the fact that "our systems, our Universities face bigger challenges and stronger competition than ever before" (European Commission "Realising the European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals", 2005, p.3). Three main areas of under-performance are identified: a) Tertiary education attainment – 21% lower than the US (38%), Canada (43%), Japan (36%) and South Korea (26%), b) Access to higher education - "the EU (52%) is slightly ahead of Japan (49%), behind Canada (59%) and far behind the US (81%) and South Korea (82%) - and c) research performance - "we have about 5.5 researchers per 1,000 employees, marginally less than Canada or South Korea, but way below the US 9.0 or Japan 9.7" (ibid. p.3). In order for the EU to be able to successfully tackle such challenges, it should focus on the development and restructuring of its HE system through the national education policies of EU member states that would follow EU education policy guidelines. These guidelines are expressed and specified in the Bologna Declaration.

O'Mahony (2002) produced a paper for the meetings that led to the Salamanca Statement<sup>34</sup> 29-30 March 2001. this paper describes the six action areas on which the meeting should focus as the identified areas of BP policy discourse. Those are "...the pillars upon [which] the Salamanca Statement should be constructed:

- **Freedom with responsibility:** empowering universities
- **Employability** on the European labour market
- **Mobility** in the higher education area

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<sup>34</sup> Over 300 European higher education institutions and their main representative organisations gathered in Salamanca on 29-30 March 2001. Their purpose was to prepare their input to the Prague meeting of the ministers in charge of higher education in the countries involved in the BP.

- **Compatibility:** a common but flexible qualifications framework
- **Quality assurance** and **certification** (accreditation)
- **Competitiveness** at home and in the world

These areas of policy convergence – each of which would be explored by two groups at the convention – were identified in the Bologna Declaration and they fit around wider issues of higher education development” (O’Mahony, 2002, p.45).

From the ‘six action areas’ or policy arenas presented above, I shall primarily focus on the discourse concerning quality. The prioritisation of quality discourse comes naturally as the remaining five features of the policy are related to it either as a presupposition or as a result of the work of quality. For example, the first feature, ‘freedom with responsibility’, for the empowerment of the universities, is vital for the desegregation of state HE state systems and the enforcement of competitive attitudes within HEI, which have to “be free to make strategic choices, to concentrate on their core areas, to choose their partners, and to position themselves to compete to deliver quality education research and service” (O’Mahony, 2002, p.48). ‘Competitiveness at home and in the world’, on the other hand, is bound to the established and acknowledged quality of an HEI. Or in other words “**Quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area**” — (Strasbourg, 3 – 4 October 2002, p.21, emphasis in the original)<sup>35</sup>.

Moreover, the quality discourse within the BP guidelines has two points of focus. One can be described as internal, as it is focused on the establishment of national and regional quality for HEIs. The other can be described as external, as it is focused on quality for international competition. During the ministerial

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<sup>35</sup>“**COMPENDIUM OF BASIC DOCUMENTS IN THE BP**” Compiled by the Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education/Higher Education and Research Division)

meetings and the follow-up group meetings within the BP, there was an explicit reinforcement and monitoring of the Bologna signatory members' steps to adapt more to both points of focus in quality. In relation to internal national quality, the BP has established the system of national reports, in which each signatory member has to present the steps taken by the nation towards the establishment of the 'six action areas' and consequently of quality. At that level, the realisation of the policy guidelines can be said to be on the right track, as most of the countries have created national quality assurance agencies (for example, Greece) or have developed their pre-existing agencies (for example, the UK) . However, in relation to the external international quality features, it has been noted that there are still issues to be overcome. As O'Mahony suggests, "To compete more on the global level European higher education needs to have grown used to competition within the continent, and even at national level. Being competitive requires a certain culture and behaviour and not just rhetoric" (O'Mahony, 2002, p.62).

The quality discourse within the BP emerges as extended not only to national and regional levels but also to the global level. In addition, as O'Mahony notes in the above quotation, the quality discourse cannot be left to take its course. The need for quality within the discourse appears to be urgent. Thus, HEI institutions and their participants appear not to have the time to be constructed silently and slowly by the processes of the discourse. Instead they are compelled to willingly accept, adapt and realise the discourse, by subjecting themselves to it. I shall return to that issue in a following section (section B.ii.a). These issues of the multilevel spread of quality discourse due to the demand for quality appear in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the preamble of the EUA Glasgow declaration:

3. Europe needs strong and creative universities as key actors in shaping the European knowledge society through their commitment to wide participation and lifelong learning, and their promotion of quality and excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation activities.



4. This will be achieved by self-confident institutions able to determine their own development and to contribute to social, cultural and economic well-being at a regional, national, European and Global level (EUA, Brussels, 15 April 2005, p.1).

As mentioned earlier, the quality discourse is interrelated with issues of competitiveness and attractiveness, within the context of global educational markets. From this perspective, Professor A. Oosterlinck, the Vice-Chancellor of K.U.Leuven and an EUA Board Member suggests the implementation of GATS<sup>36</sup> on HE. "One could even argue that GATS could be considered as an extension of the Bologna system, which we are currently implementing throughout Europe. The Bologna Declaration aims to establish an open European space for higher education. It is obvious that Bologna will increase competition among education providers, but it will (p.5) also improve the overall quality of European education... ..GATS is a reality, even though much still needs to be filled in. It would be unwise of the world of education to try to ignore this reality. In my opinion, it would make more sense to enter into the discussions and to try to avoid polarization" (Washington, May 23rd, 2002, p.6).

Through the simultaneous discussion of the globalisation discourse with the BP policy discourse, the issue of 'quality' arose and became connected within different discussions concerning HE. For example, the areas in which the EHEA is under-performing compared to Canada, Japan or South Korea appear in the first instance as numerical appreciations of the HE outcomes. The areas which are being measured, and their numerical appreciations construct and define the HE competition on a global level as, on the one hand, they rate different HE systems and on the other, they set targets to be achieved and define goals and aims. To same extent, though, these types of numerical outcomes are related to HE auditing and thus present the EHEA as under-performing. The characterisation of 'under-performance', within the currently dominant discourse

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<sup>36</sup> General Agreement on Trade in Services

on quality, instantly raises connotations related to the 'quality' of HE that is being offered.

On the other side of the above argument, can be found the national HE policies of the BP signatory countries, which are guided towards initiatives promoting the widening of access and participation in HE. Interestingly, widening access to and participation in HE are promoted and perceived, in a great extent, within a context and a political discourse of equity and opportunity. However, their purposive introduction underlying these initiatives aims primarily to assist the EHEA to overcome the low percentages of HE attainment, access to HE and research performance in the global HE competitive market. Equity in HE becomes a significant factor at the point that it is regarded as participation within HE. And wider participation is, foremost, economically meaningful as it supports the labour market with a highly educated population, brings income to HEIs through fees, reaches the global numerical standards, re-establishes HE performance and quality and finally, reinforces the attractiveness and competitiveness of the HE system and specifically the EHEA.

In any case, what appears as a unifying aspect within the globalisation and BP discourse regarding their mutual characteristics is the unquestioned prioritisation of quality within HE (Morley, 2003, 2004). In the previous paragraph, I tried to draw connections between HE systems' auditing and the understanding of quality. Now I will move forward into the connections between 'quality' and the notions of workforce flexibility, competitiveness, managerialism and self-organisation. These are recognised as the underlying issues within the six areas of action identified in Salamanca and presented by O'Mahony (2003). As I mentioned earlier, quality in relation to them appears both as a prerequisite and as a consequence. In that sense, quality and the related features construct a new generic policy ensemble based on the ideas of neo-liberalism. In this new policy regime, the constructive discourse is that of self-organisation, self-responsibility and autonomy – applied both to HEIs and their participants – and the policy

technologies for its sustainability are the reformation of the self in order to adapt to the new 'quality culture' and to the rewarding of managerial ideologies. It is a regime that bases its governance not only on its acceptance by the largest part of the population - 45 signatory countries of the BP – but on excluding discursively the subjectivities that lie outside the policy discourse. I shall return to these issues extensively in the following sections.

Concluding this section, I would suggest that there are analogous relationships between the discourses of globalisation and the BP. The ideological features of the globalisation discourse have been embodied in that of Bologna, as an education policy response to the global context. Because of the similarities of the two discourses, it could be claimed on one hand that the discourse is merely moving, from the global to the national levels, as its main features, that is, competitiveness, flexibility and quality, remain unchanged. On the other hand, the continuous reference to social and cultural issues in the BP discourse could suggest that the adoption of the globalisation discourse is not blindfold and silent, but is a process of constant discursive recontextualisation. Finally, it seems, according to my appreciation, that the two discourses are neither similar to nor parallel to each other. Nevertheless, it appears that the BP policy discourse only makes sense, only has a need to exist, in the terms, demands and patterns set by the globalisation discourse. Moreover, they stand with ideologically parallel features but these appear with different strength and force in their construction as discourses.

## **Chapter 4: Concept of Discourse**

In this chapter I will conceptualise further the relationship between the globalisation discourse and the BP discourse. In order to do so, I shall start with a theoretical discussion on discourse, in which I position myself as researcher, as well as placing this research in its theoretical context, and continue with a discursive analytical approach to the official BP policy documents that will also illustrate the context for the primary data analysis which follows (Part C). Moreover, the present chapter, although placed in the theoretical section of this thesis is based on and informed by analytical outcomes deriving primarily from the secondary data, and to a lesser extent from the primary data.

### **Section 1: Concept of Discourse and the Position of the Researcher**

In this section I will set out the theoretical framework in which the notion of discourse is used in this research. By doing so, I will also present the approach that I adopt to discourse in relation to the BP research and finally I will place this research within the discursive context on European higher education policy.

In this research the notion of 'discourse' is used according to the Foucauldian conceptualisation and framework. In an attempt to describe the notion, I will concentrate on a presentation of its features and discuss it in relation to other concepts such as power and ideology. Moreover, while positioning myself in relation to 'discourse', I will also try to present how the Foucauldian discursive features can be traced in education policy theorisation with the support of Ball's work on 'policy technologies' and also through the introduction of the notions of governance and governmentality, based on the analysis of the BP official documents.

'Discourses' will be regarded as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1977, p.49) and in this context "we are the

subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows" (Ball, 1994, p. 22). Furthermore, it follows from the above quotations not only that discourses identify and constitute their own object, that is their objective, their theme, and the limits and borders in which the discursive practices are realised, but also that the subject is also produced within these discursive limitations, positionings and expectations. However, as discussed previously (see Chapter 1) agency is not diminished into passivity, as agents are constructed and positioned through a multiplicity of contrary discourses that allow them the space to oppose, or not to conform, to a primary discourse while engaging in social practices in which the primary discourse is a constructive element and is expressed through them.

The features of Foucauldian discourse have been usefully organised and presented by Alan Sheridan (see Table 1). Sheridan discusses three sets of procedures: a) procedures of exclusion, b) procedures that limit and control discourse and c) procedures for the control of discourse; and four methodological principles, a) reversal, b) discontinuity, c) specificity and d) exteriority, all inscribed in the notion of discourse, as discussed in Chapter 1. Nevertheless, what must always be kept in mind is that each social practice is constructed based on a specific *logo* (discourse). That logo specifies the discourse of the social practice. It is constructed and expressed through techniques that leave traces not on the human body but on the behaviour and the way of thinking of the subjects. Discourses define the means of social practice, and policy can be thought and understood as one of these. The discourse specifies and orients each person's positioning in the procedure of the social practice. In the policy realisation process the discourse positions the agents, either policy makers or HEIs participants within the BP, not only according to time, space and interactions but also in the way that knowledge is transmitted, no matter whether this knowledge is substantive knowledge or is sourced from disciplinary methods and mechanisms such as a) actions and behaviour b) attitudes and dispositions as forms of

knowledge. In addition, within a social practice, there is a multiplicity of discourses, which can be complementary, oppositional, and supportive or embedded in each other, identified within social practices that are realised and operated through different institutions. For example, the EHEA is an education policy operated by the EU and national institutions. As Foucault notes in the *History of Sexuality* "...as this first overview shows, we are dealing less with a discourse on sex than with a multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions" (Foucault, 1979, p. 33).

Discourse, in the Foucauldian conceptualisation, is closely associated with power. Discourse establishes the means through which power operates, as "there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p.93). Power is perceived as dynamic, formed by and through social relationships between subjects, organizations and the state. It is constructed through relations of force and is characterized as capillary. Power relations are included in every social practice. Through discourse, power produces the normalization of the subjects particularly in relation to what is perceived as acceptable behaviour or thought, in each specific historical, political and social construction. In that context,

...power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which... transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another... the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; as the strategies in which they take effect... (Foucault, 1979, p.92-93).

However, I will adopt an instrumental approach to the notion of discourse. This approach is generated by the aim of this research, which is principally to diagnose not only the 'power' embedded in the official education policy discourse on EHEA, but also how this discourse is transformed into educational policy and how other related discourses influence and appear in relation to the official discourse. Moreover, the EHEA official discourse will be regarded as a regulatory technology within education policy. In addition, and according to Foucault's own words, "Discourses are not about objects, they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention" (Foucault, 1974, p.49). So, the object of the discussion of this research will be bound to whatever has already been said in the official education policy discourse, yet it will also be able to reveal the oppositions or differentiations of other interrelated discourses.

In the European context, official education policy discourse is expressed through the voluntary arrangements of nation-states for the transformation of European higher education. The official discussion of EHEA in HEI within the BP is the specific feature that is under investigation in this research. The discussion concerned with the 'readability and comparability of degrees', and the construction of two cycles of studies, that is, three years of undergraduate studies, two years for an MA and three more for a PhD (3-5-8). The discussion of 'quality' establishes a kind of 'curriculum' for the creation of the EHEA. Explicitly, the time, space and content of pedagogic practice are specified by the official European education policy discourse, and the nation-states are expected to comply with the arranged guidelines by 2010.

As this research attempts to create a 'diagnosis' of discourse about the EHEA in HEI, the discussion will be both analytical and descriptive. The focus of the discussion in relation to discourse is on how the official EU education policy discourse is constructed from several other specifically focused discourses. These discourses can be either for or against the main ideological orientation of the official discourse. The question that is raised is which features of each discourse interrelate for the construction of the main discourse, and how the selection of these features takes place.

Furthermore, both the main discourses, that is, on European integration as expressed in the BP and on globalisation, consist of discourses that support or oppose them, but which are embedded in the EHEA discourse, such as the discourses on knowledge economy or lifelong learning. These will be described as secondary. The existence of the secondary discourses and their construction is based on the contradictions of the main discourse, which creates space for different interpretations.

While discussing the discourses of globalisation and of the BP in the previous section, I argued that the two discourses appear to have a causal relationship, as the BP discourse only makes sense when seen in relation to the globalisation discourse. I also tried to draw attention to the similarities of the two processes – globalisation and European integration. For that description, I referred to and used Rizvi's and Lingard's (1998) dual understanding of the notion of globalisation, according to which globalisation is both a 'process' and an 'ideological discourse' (see previous section). I am forced to introduce a brief discussion of the relationship of the two notions, ideology and discourse, primarily to explain the meaning of ideology in this research, as Foucault rejects any relation between the notions of discourse and of ideology. He specifically writes:



We must not expect the discourse on sex to tell us, above all, what strategy they derive from, or what moral divisions they accompany, or what ideology – dominant or dominated – they represent; rather we must question them on the two levels they represent; tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode in the various confrontations that occur)(Foucault, 1979, p. 102).

Within this context, the word 'ideology' does not refer to Marx's or Althusser's appreciation, and moreover does not have any reference to the Marxist or post-Marxist approaches. That type of conceptualisation would lead my research and data analysis to an abstract appreciation of the consciousness or false consciousness of the interviewees, to an economic interpretation of the top-down imposition and implementation of European education policy, and end, probably, in an acknowledgement of the reproduction of the dominant ideology through the official state discourse. However, I prefer a different approach based on the prioritisation of discourse. Dant (1991) discusses the differences between ideology and discourse purely on a theoretical and analytical level, and consequently overlook their empirical impact. For Dant, locating knowledge and ideology at the 'level of consciousness' or the 'individual mind' creates two problems:

Firstly, it becomes an empirically inaccessible phenomenon that always has to be construed in analysis. Secondly, it separates off knowledge from the material, concrete level of existence laying emphasis on the individual, subjective level of consciousness (Dant, 1991, p. 195).

In relation to the empirical impact of the notion of discourse, he goes on to state that:

The structuralist category of 'discourse' refers to an empirical phenomenon: the concrete utterances by which human individuals exchange meaning. It is not a function of some other level such as consciousness, universal conditions of existence (i.e. universal truths) or even the material conditions of existence (the economic base). The category of discourse does not refer to meanings produced and construed by individual intention but to the product of the exchange between individuals. As a theoretical category 'discourse' does not do the same work as the category of 'knowledge' or 'ideology' but it does describe an empirical phenomenon, where knowledge and ideology are effectively produced (Dant, 1991, p. 195).

In my view, the appreciation of discourse as a descriptive modality at the level of the recontextualisation of notions, ideas, perspectives and perceptions at the political, cultural and economic level, in which the subjectivity of the agent is both a product of discourse and a force for its recontextualisation, leads to a more concrete understanding of the current global and European higher education policies and changes. The adjective 'ideological', then, used to refer to discourse in this research, does not take its meaning from 'ideology' as a theoretical and analytical notion in which the discourse of consciousness is embedded, but rather it refers to an understanding of a more empirical essence of ideas and words, embedded in language and its usage. This follows from the decision to use the notion of 'discourse' to explore the subjectivities that are being constructed within the arena of the CESHE policy.

Moreover, in saying this, I should also define 'discourse' in relation to language and the mode of analysis that I adopt. Language is important as the vehicle of

discourse, as the mode for communication, and as the means for the establishment, or diminution of a discourse. However, I should also state that the analysis of the official documents and of the interviews is not dependent on a textual discourse analysis mode. In addition, when I refer to policy as text or policy as discourse I do not refer to textual discourse analysis and I am not adopting Fairclough's appreciation of the Foucauldian discourse:

While recognising Foucault's immense contribution to theories of discourse analysis, Fairclough points to the neglect of textual analysis in his work, and suggests that this is a serious limitation. Foucault's work is concerned mainly with the social and political analysis of social practices as systems of rules, rather than with textual analysis of real instances of what is said or written, that is, with the analysis of actual texts (Olssen et al., 2004, p.68).

Rather, I am fully committing the analysis of this research to Foucault's understanding that:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network (Foucault, 2002, p.25).

Finally, I will begin my attempt to position this research in a discursive context by stating which discourses I prioritise and why, so as to justify and introduce, in this theoretical section, where the analysis will be focused. As previously mentioned, the BP is treated as EU education policy-discourse. Moreover, this policy discourse embodies and is constructed by counter discourses. As an example of counter discourses I will describe the call upon EHEIs for competitiveness, quality and attractiveness, as they are identified in the official BP documents.

As processes that can be viewed in parallel, the theorisation of European integration and globalisation are both discussed by academics according to three main dimensions: a) political, b) cultural and c) economic. However, when the discussion of globalisation enters the field of education, the researcher of education policy is dragged into a discussion of economic features, not by preference, but rather by the condition that is created at the level of the implications of the globalisation process for educational change and policy. Within this context, all current policies in education prioritise economic implications and regard economic features as the key to further national and regional economic development.

The BP is a practical consequence of the idea of education as a feature of economic development at the EU level. The policy of convergence of the EHEIs towards regional economic development as stated in the official discourse (see previous section) can only be realised through the preservation of quality within the HEIs. 'Quality' can be thought of and understood in many ways. Thus, to avoid misinterpretations, the BP states clearly the context in which quality should be thought of. As quoted in previous sections (the presentations of official BP documents and of the BP discourse), the BP-related documents call for a European Higher Education that will produce a flexible workforce able to participate and engage successfully in the global market. Thus these documents express the need to establish well-organised and autonomous institutions with a common basis of standards.

Within this context, the new model of 3-5-8 years of study has come into being. The model is based on a clear-cut two-cycle structure of undergraduate and post-graduate study. For this system to work efficiently and to allow for fast engagement with the labour process, students should initially not spend more than the minimum possible time within each institution. The idea is that students are trained, move into the workforce, and after some time come back to the institution for further educational development, that is, lifelong learning.

Institutions, on the other hand, are expected to provide the appropriate expertise suggested by the needs of corporations, and also try to keep the students within the institution for the minimum time. They should open their doors to mass education; they should have courses that can be 'readable', that is, clear modules and curricula that employers can examine; 'comparable', meaning that the modules should be part of a credit system and be judged in relation to modules on the same subject in various institutions; and completed in the arranged time. They should compete with other institutions in order to raise their standards. They should be left to be autonomous in a global market, without state intervention, to compete with other institutions in order to develop and elaborate their HE purposes.

This description is a practical appreciation of how the BP features are to be found within the organisation of HEI. In other words, quality, as defined by EU education policy terms, implies a successful engagement with the global market, which, in turn, implies excellent performance at all levels on the part of the institution and its participants. Such performance can only be established through strong managerialism.

### **Theorisation of Quality**

At this point I shall briefly set aside the discussion of the BP and its policy-discourse. I will outline some of the most influential approaches or 'schools' on 'quality'. Kirkpatrick and Lucio (1995) explore two of the main approaches: a) Total Quality Management (TQM) and b) the universal accreditation scheme established by the British Standards Institute (BSI) and known as BS5750, which offers standards of quality assurance. These two approaches have significant differences not only in how they discuss quality, but also in the way quality assessments should be implemented and achieved.

TQM can be described as a process of introducing a new culture within organisations. Specifically, this is a 'customer oriented' culture that is based on the satisfaction of 'internal' and 'external' customers and that aims to improve the effectiveness and flexibility of the organisation. Oaklands has defined TQM in detail as follows:

Total quality management is an approach to improve the effectiveness and flexibility of business as a whole. It is essentially a way of organising and involving the whole organisation; every department, every activity, every single person at every level. For an organisation to be truly effective, each part of it must work properly together, recognising that every person and every activity affects, and in turn is affected by, others (Oakland, 1991, p.15).

Within the TQM framework, every part of an organisation, from single employees to whole departments, should be treated by other employees or departments as a 'customer'. However, this customer is described as 'internal' and is part of the internal effectiveness of the organisational structure. The 'external' customers of the organisation, which are those at whom the organisation is targeting for its profits, should be treated in the same way. TQM constructs and provides an ideological and ethical pattern regarding the working practices, procedures and habitual features of the organisation and its participants.

On the other hand, the BSI's BS5750 "scheme and others like it emphasize the need to establish formal systems of quality control in order to ensure that products and services conform to specified standards" (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995, p.5). According to that scheme, 'quality' is understood as "the totality of

features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs" (ISO, 1990, quoted in Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995, p.5).

The last approach to quality that Kirkpatrick and Lucio discuss is that of 'measuring levels of consumer satisfaction', which is clearly a market-oriented approach. This approach prioritises consumers' needs and attempts to adapt to their understanding of quality. As Kirkpatrick and Lucio note, Parasuraman et al. (1985)

...identified five 'universal' dimensions of service quality as perceived by 'external' customers: tangibles (the physical layout of buildings etc.), reliability, responsiveness, assurance (courtesy and knowledge of staff) and empathy. This framework has been used in wide variety of service firms as a technique for measuring customer expectations and perceptions of quality. The logic behind it is that firms should become hypersensitive to consumer expectations and perceptions and should amend their own sales and marketing strategies accordingly (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995, p.6).

The quality model presented above might appear as efficient and effective in the business world. However, its utilisation within higher education may lead to a controversial outcome, if it is left to HE consumers, students and companies, they to decide what is valid knowledge to be taught. This type of HE quality conceptualisation moves towards a picture of HE in which it is likely to lead to a division of knowledge. The first and most promoted type would be 'commercial' knowledge, funded by the companies and aiming to serve their current market orientation and consequently their demands. And it is this kind of knowledge production and transition that it is celebrated by the KE discourse. The second would be based on a more traditional appreciation of basic knowledge, and would be supported by some of the HE participants with the fear of not being

validated for funding by industries, as it will not serve the needs of the latter. Moreover, and probably pushing this to extremes, the straightforward connection between HEIs and industries at the level of funding may result in the loss 'authoritative' and 'elite' status of the teacher and/or academic as the agent that holds and constructs knowledge and the superior status of university will disappear, along with the disappearance of basic research.

Summing up, TQM focuses on the structure and procedures of the organisation, and aims at a changed cultural attitude, while the BSI scheme for the accreditation of quality focuses on institutional adaptation to standards, thus introducing a highly bureaucratic mechanism. As they promote different ways and means of ensuring quality, I broadly agree with Kirkpatrick and Lucio when they comment that:

What is evident is not a clear, unified programme of quality improvement, but a wide variety of approaches which have in common only the most basic objective of somehow increasing the competitive advantage and profitability of a firm (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995, p.6)

At this point, the question that arises is which quality approach is being used within higher education, at least in the British context<sup>37</sup>. Morley's work on 'the genesis of the quality assurance movement', which describes the history of quality assurance bodies and procedures in England, probably complicates the answer to this question. Various agents, guided by different governments through the years, have created in the UK many quality bodies, audits, and a significant amount of paperwork. In this context, some academics take the cynical view that quality assurance was introduced as a regulatory device for the process of

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<sup>37</sup> In the area of quality assurance Greece appears to be in the early stages. Greece has adopted the Bologna Guideline on quality and has committed itself to the construction of a quality assurance body for the auditing of Greek HEIs. However, the process is still ongoing. The auditing and quality assurance processes that are discussed in the data regarding the Greek HEIs are mainly initiatives of the institutions themselves.



production rather than as a check on the quality of the product itself. The education reform of the schools sector in Britain in the 1980s was soon followed by political concerns over the regulation of quality and standards in higher education. Kogan and Hanney (2000) argue that perhaps no area of public policy has been subjected to such radical changes over the last 20 years as higher education" (Kogan and Hanney, 2000 quoted in Morley, 2004, p.14).

Interestingly, though, the discussion on quality is closely connected to cultural change. Discussing the White Paper on Higher Education, *Realising our Potential*, Morley explains "the White Paper also called for 'a key cultural change' that would 'enforce accountability' to the taxpayer" (DES 1993 p.5, quoted in Morley 2004 p. 15). Within the discourse on quality as cultural change can be found the introduction of new values and ethics concerning the way that HEIs and their participants operate.

### **Regulatory Mechanisms and Policy Technologies in the Context of the Bologna Process**

While discussing the relationship between discourse and power in the previous section, I claimed that this research aims to make a diagnosis not only of the 'power' embedded in the official education policy discourse on CESHE, but also of how this discourse is transformed into educational policy and how other related discourses influence the official discourse and appear in relation to it. Moreover, discourse will be regarded as a regulatory technology within education policy. Within this context, in this research I will also identify and describe the subjectivities that are being formed on the one hand by discourse/power control as well as, on the other hand, outline the space that subjects find within power and discourse struggles to show agency through their voice and practice. The context of the BP and this research will be used to this end as a representative example, with the hope of obtaining an appreciation, at the empirical level, of the condition of European higher education the time of this research. This and the

following section primarily aim to serve as a link between the appreciation of discourse as a methodological and theoretical concept, as it has been presented so far, and the next section in which its utility as an analytical tool will be considered. As already stated at the beginning of this chapter, the present and following sections aim at an elaborative theoretical discussion driven by the outcomes of my analysis of the secondary and primary data.

The main concern of the following data analysis is the way in which the culture of quality is induced in HEIs through the present education policy regime creating a condition of 'quality culture' in higher education. As with any other power regime, the BP policy regime, from its beginning gave birth to opposition, which largely arose from HEIs and their participants. These oppositions can be seen as forms of resistance either to the newly introduced policy regime or to the changes that the new policy would introduce to the constituted context of higher education. In any case, the expression of opposition through different forms of resistance produces struggles. In the EU higher education policy context, these struggles become real in the BP discourse, through the multiplicity of texts and meetings, the process of goal setting and, more importantly, the struggle over the definition of the terms and conditions of the policy realisation.

The struggle that took place during the making of the Bologna Declaration, which is obvious in the numerous explanatory and commentary documents that followed it, and which continues now, is not merely a struggle over meaning. As Foucault suggests, "no doubt communicating is always a certain way of acting upon another person or persons. But the production and circulation of elements of meaning can have as their objective or as their consequences certain results in the realm of power; the latter are not simply an aspect of the former" (Foucault, 2000, p.13). The struggle appears to be spread within and across the different levels that the BP as policy influences. In this instance, by the term 'struggle' I am trying to cover a whole range of forms of engagement with the BP policy discourse. The levels of struggle within the BP policy discourse entail, on the one

hand, a spatial context of struggle and, on the other, struggles over the societal implications of the policy realisation.

Three main levels are located in the spatial context (see Table 3): a) regional b) national c) institutional. In the context of societal implications, connotations on a) the political, b) the economic and c) the social levels can be found.

**Table 3: BP Policy: Levels of struggle**

Spatial context		Societal implications	
Global: globalisation, complexity, fluidity, time/space compression, information transition, diminution of the nation state		Globalisation: Similar policies on higher education in different parts of the world. Demand for HE to participate in the global economic market/competition. Demand for labour force qualifications and mobility, HE reform	
Regional	Member-states' education ministers collectively set in place the beginning of an EU HE policy	Political	Correlation between member-states, EU and Commission on education policy issues
National	Governments set their national HE policy framework according to Bologna targets	Economic	EU's ability to successfully compete in global context
Institutional	Setting internal procedures to meet national and regional policy goals. Struggles for retaining a 'space' within the realisation of policy goals.	Social	Creation of EU citizenship – affinity

At this point I will move on to a more elaborated description of the Bologna policy discourse struggles, beginning with the spatial levels. At the regional level, the struggles can be identified in the attempt of the 29 education ministers to establish collectively a common set of goals in relation to an EU HE policy. As stated in the official call for the creation of the Common European Area in Higher Education by the EU, the ministers were asked to focus, not on the similarities between the higher education system of their country of origin and the HE systems of other member states, but instead on their differences. That was in order to find ways to overcome these differences at a regional level. Interestingly though, the BP discourse recontextualised on a national level was stressing the commonalities of different member states' higher education systems. Hingel, the head of the education policy unit in Brussels, in his March 2000 speech at the Lisbon European Council reiterated that:

Since the very beginning of European co-operation in the field of education, Ministers of Education have underlined the diversity of their systems of education. The very reason why they met was in fact that their systems were diverse. Any mentioning of *common denominators* was considered of lesser importance and mainly used in national debates. The Lisbon conclusions break with this by asking the Ministers to concentrate their reflection on what is common. ... The Lisbon conclusions implicitly give the Union the mandate to develop a *common interest approach* in education going beyond national diversities as can already be seen in the demand to Ministers of Education to debate common objectives of educational systems. This mandate will lead to an increase in the European dimension of national educational policies. (Hingel, 2001, pp. 15 & 19, italics in the original)

The call upon a European dimension in education was in order to locate the highly diverse in national higher education systems areas towards which goals of convergence could be set. However, in this process, each member state had to

forsake, in the name of European higher education convergence, several of the specific national characteristics of their higher education systems. These included in particular structural characteristics, which were established through the evolution of each higher education system and which are embedded in each member state's social conditions.

The next step following the production of the Bologna Declaration document was the policy's move from the abstract conceptual level of its production to its practical application on the national level. Specifically, the next set of struggles appears in the way in which the policy targets were responded to by each member state. However, the varying of the struggle at the national level demonstrates differences between different member states. For example, in the Greek context a movement <sup>38</sup> on the part of the Student Union against the BP was observed, primarily between 1998 and 2001, the first three years of the policy. That was even before the Bologna Declaration was signed, as the Commission had already set the direction of European higher education with the publication of the 1995 White Paper on "Teaching and Learning: towards the learning society". This Paper led to the creation of the laws N. 2525/97<sup>39</sup> and N. 2640/98, which basically restructured post-compulsory secondary education and the way in which the transition from secondary to tertiary education is realised. During this first period, academics were also engaged in active opposition to the Bologna Policy discourse. Oppositional argumentation and debate on that discourse took place on all societal levels, and that will be presented later in this section. However, what sparked the struggles against the BP were the policy

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<sup>38</sup> Between 1997 and 2001 I was an undergraduate student in Greece, studying at the University of Patras. The oppositions and struggles presented in the thesis are based on my personal experience of that period. However, references to university closures, either of the whole institution due to the Dean's decision as a way of expressing the opposition of the academics to the Bologna Policy Discourse, or departmental occupations, and to whole institution occupations as an expression of opposition by students unions, can be found in university and departmental records. Nonetheless, the intensity of the struggles can only be described subjectively by the people that were part of that movement, either for or against. For further reference to strikes and occupations see also Katsikas and Therianos, 2004, p.228 note 14.

<sup>39</sup> a) N. 2525/1997 "Unified Upper Secondary Schools, access of its graduates to tertiary education, evaluation of educational work and other provisions b) N. 2648/1998 " Secondary Technical Vocational Education and other provisions"

suggestions and discussions on forthcoming laws on higher education. The main issues under discussion were firstly the construction of a quality assurance system for higher education – as mentioned in previous sections Greece had never used a quality assurance system before and neither HEI's nor their academics were familiar with evaluation procedures. The second main issue was the upgrading of the Greek TEI (Technological Vocational Institutions) polytechnics to ATEI (Highest Technological Vocational Institutions), offering those institutions equal status with AEI (Highest Education Institutions<sup>40</sup>) universities – up to that point TEI were considered higher education institutions, not the highest. Thirdly, two cycles of studies and the 3-5-8 system were to be introduced, which would imply changes in the structure and curricula of all higher education, as the minimum period of time for a degree from a Greek HEI is four years, with engineering and architecture a minimum of five years and medicine a minimum of six. Consequently, the minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Gerasimos Arsenis, resigned, as he was not able to come to an agreement with the oppositional interest groups. Interestingly, however, in England there is no record of such public opposition or struggles. Moreover, the majority of my English academic interviewees had little knowledge or understanding of the BP. Considering the fact that I conducted most of the English context interviews in 2004-2005, I found their lack of appreciation of the significance of Bologna rather striking, as, presumably, the BP in that period was almost halfway through its original time frame (Bologna goals are due to be realised by 2010). This lack can be explained, to a great extent, by the fact that the BP initiatives follow the Anglo-Saxon model in terms of higher education structure. I shall elaborate further on this during the data analysis.

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<sup>40</sup> c) N. 2916/2001 "Structural organisation of Highest Education and regulation of issues of its technological sector" upgrading of polytechnics to universities

d) N. 2986/2002 "Organisation of regional services the first degree and secondary education, evaluation of educational work and teachers, further education of teachers and other provisions"

e) N. 3027/2002 "Regulation of issues of the Organisation of School Buildings, of highest education and other provisions"

However, during that period the White Paper entitled "The future of higher education" (Crown copyright, 2003) was published in the UK. It was presented in January 2003, and can be seen as the only official document implicitly related to the BP. The White Paper first and foremost revise the future of UK higher education, primarily introducing the separation of HEIs into three types. These different typologically institutions will provide input into three areas related to HE: a) research, b) standard of teaching and learning and c) links between universities and business. The new typology promotes the following three institutional brands: a) the research university, b) non research-intensive universities focusing on excellence in teaching and learning, and, finally, c) institutions offering two-year foundation vocational degrees to meet the needs of business. Even though there is no clear reference within the White Paper to the Bologna policy discourse, the importance of setting UK HE in the regional context is highlighted on several occasions. One example of this is in Chapter 3, in a section with the title "Higher education and business – exchanging and developing knowledge and skills":

To improve, institutions should increasingly be embedded in their regional economies, and closely linked with the emerging agendas of Regional Development Agencies. The nature of the role will depend upon each institution's mission and skills: for some it will be mainly national, for some closer to home. But in all cases, universities and colleges are key drivers for their regions, both economically and in terms of the social and cultural contribution they make to their communities (White Paper, 2003, p.40)

Another example is in the section titled "Strengthening the Regional Partnership":

The involvement of universities and colleges in regional, social and economic development is critical. Their work in knowledge and skills transfer is not their only contribution. Institutions are significant employers in local and regional economies. In addition they have a key leadership

role, are often engaged in community capacity building and regeneration and make an important contribution to civil society. Higher education's contribution to regional development very much depends on forging partnerships between institutions in each region and the RDA – as well as with other partners involved in regional skills, business, and economic development, such as the local Learning and Skills Council (White Paper, 2003, p.45)

Despite the absence of direct reference to the BP policy discourse, the White Paper clearly<sup>41</sup> introduced the need for reform and change in UK HE, in order for it to adapt to global and regional demands and standards, with the aim of successfully engaging with global HE competition. UK academics opposed this reform by expressing their displeasure with regard to issues of funding and evaluation.

The final level is the actual realisation of the Bologna policy discourse within HEIs. At this level we can identify the struggles of individual institutions on three dimensions: a) to adapt to policies or guidelines deriving from their national governments, b) to adapt to Bologna policy discourse as regional guidelines and c) the need for HEIs to preserve their existence and autonomy within a context of reform. The HEIs have to deal with national and regional demands in terms of quality, which plays an important role in funding. This consequently influences the range of research that a university can undertake as well as the autonomy that the institution has in terms of subject areas and courses that it offers. In order to engage with national and regional goals and issues of external quality, all four institutions examined in this research, were found to have introduced internal procedures that would set a context within the institution for adjustment to the introduced reform, in several instances even before the reform had taken

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<sup>41</sup>The UK government White Paper, "The future of higher education" (2003), proposes to change the system so that the title of 'University' can be awarded to institutions on the basis of their taught degrees, without requiring evidence for research (p.14-15) as noted in Corbet. A. (2005), note no. 2 in chapter 1, p. 214



on an official national character. For example, in the Greek context, both the old university and the former polytechnic had established a system of internal quality assurance, the effectiveness and efficiency of which varies in each of the institutions and within their departments, long before the idea for the creation of a central quality assurance authority was discussed officially in Greece. By contrast, in England institutional internal quality procedures are well established. However, again both the old university and the former polytechnic had long before appreciated the need to attract international students as vital for their financial survival and had worked to this end, not only on the quality of their research, teaching and learning but also on the conditions of study they were able to offer their students. Although in both cases the institutions appear to adapt relatively quickly and appropriately to the reform context, opposition to all levels of this reform can be identified. As will be discussed in the analysis, the former polytechnics in both countries are struggling to attain what is asked of them, while the old universities, again in both countries, appear to have more subtle opposition relating to issues such as the definition of the quality which they are asked to produce, the quality culture that is imposed on them and to which they have to adapt, and the lack of autonomy in the selection of research areas as research is increasingly bound to business or strategic funding and thus business demands.

Moving to the second type of struggle, those concerned with the societal implications of the policy realisation, I shall begin the discussion from the political dimension. The politics related to European higher education, and especially those related to the BP, are interesting. As reported in Balanya et al. (2000, p. 21) the ERT (European Roundtable of Industrialists) of European corporations played an important role in the establishment of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, earlier than the agreement was thought to take place by the EU member-states.

The ERT's role in these striking new developments on the European level should not be underestimated. Lord Cockfield (Industry Commissioner)

eventually admitted that the White Paper (which became the basis of the 1986 Single European Act, the legal framework of the Single Market) was influenced by the ERT's action plan, and in a 1993 television interview, Delors recognised the 'continuing pressure' of the ERT, claiming that it was 'one of the main driving forces behind the Single Market' (Balanya et al. p. 22)

The ERT, seeing the establishment of European economic convergence as in their own financial interests, put pressure on the Commission. In addition, these industrialists showed interest in European infrastructures and, in European higher education, particularly in vocational qualifications and the readability, comparability and credibility of degrees, as much as in the their quality. Again in Balanya et al., the opinion of the ERT on education is given: "The ERT has historically stressed the need to leave education in the hands of industry instead of people 'who appear to have no dialogue with, nor understanding of, industry and the path of progress'" (Balanya et al. p. 31). Here, the ERT clearly plays its part in the struggle over "what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (Ball, 1990, p 2) within the BP policy discourse. It is a struggle over who gets to be heard, as in their own words they seek to displace more traditional voices in discourses of higher education.

Thus the Commission was under pressure again. However, in the notion of the convergence of higher education, the Commission was able to introduce its own agenda in terms of the social and cultural aspects along with the economic character of higher education. As mentioned in the previous section, the Commission had been trying to promote the idea of EHE convergence since the 1980s, for example via the establishment of the 'SOCRATES' programme. At that stage the member-states were not seriously interested in this area. Nevertheless, during the 1990s, the Commission, under the presidency of Jacques Delors, gained more power over the EU issues, and his development plan for the European Commission (known as the "Delors Plan") is still within the

Commission's action guidelines. Consequently, the European Parliament, the official legislative body of the EU, was not altogether happy with the evolution and strengthening of the Commission. Thus, the member states were left in the complex situation of needing to respond to the expectations and demands of the ERT in relation to higher education while retaining their authority over national higher education systems, without the interference of the Commission. As a conclusion, the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 was made by the four most influential member states, and expanded to 29 states one year later. The Commission, despite having lost the possibility of claiming the originality of the initiatives towards the creation of a Common European Area in Higher Education, adopted the process and thus found a way to promote its agenda on higher education through the BP. The politics of Bologna then continued in different arenas, those of the struggles between the member states and the Commission, and of the way in which the BP was to be presented in the nation states by their governments. In each arena, level, or dimension of the BP, oppositional struggles or struggles over the realisation of the initiatives are present.

In the economic dimension, the main struggle can be broadly defined as concerning the ability of the EU to compete successfully in the global context. As discussed previously, the BP, as an initiative with policy features, was created in order to serve this purpose. However, the consequences of the proposed policy reform in EHE led to state funding of higher education institutions being reduced and left them to compete among themselves, not only in the European, but also the global context, for external funding. For this reason, HEIs are led increasingly by the needs of business and industry, moving away from their traditional priority of disciplinary education to vocational subject areas that would provide qualified and specialised labour forces.

Finally, the social dimension of the BP policy discourse is promoted through the manifestation of the discourse on European citizenship that is said to lead to European affinity. Much has been written about how European citizenship can be

successfully created, and even more on what it means to be European. Although this is not an issue that will be discussed in detail the analysis, the data showed that none of the interviewees defined themselves as European. When they were specifically asked if they felt European, most of them expressed a problem in understanding the term. Although this research cannot investigate the meaning and definition of European identity, as I regard this to be a philosophical question and an arena of argumentation that I do not wish to enter into, the way that European affinity is being constructed and imposed on subjects through the discourses of 'European citizenship' and 'European Identity' has some bearing on my work.

Examining the field of the societal implications of the political, economic and social dimensions of the BP in relation to the spatial context in which they take place, the struggles and oppositions noted here present a duality in terms of their aims. On one hand, the totalising characteristics of the Bologna policy discourse can be identified, primarily in relation to EU guidelines, initiatives, and time limits and to EU and non-EU member-states' national policy. On the other hand, individualising characteristics of the signatory countries can also be located, while focusing on the differences in national policies or approaches to BP initiatives or on the approach and reaction of separate HEIs, their departments and their participants.

The dual characteristics of the realisation of the Bologna policy discourse, that of the totalisation procedures and individualisation processes, are bound to power struggles, and primarily the type of struggles that are related to the 'submission of the subjectivity'. As Foucault explains,

...and nowadays, the struggle against the forms of subjection – against the submission of subjectivity – is becoming more and more important, even though the struggles against forms of domination and exploitation have not disappeared. Quite the contrary...But I'd like to underline the fact

that the state's power (and that's one of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualising and a totalising form of power. Never, I think, in the history of human societies – even in the old Chinese society – has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and of totalisation procedures (Foucault, 2000, p.13).

Finally, and before I move on to the conceptualisation of struggles, I should mention that I shall not expand here on the relationship of the Bologna policy discourse to that of globalisation, as this has been discussed in a previous section. Moreover, the globalisation discourse is regarded as fundamental and of primary significance to the construction of the BP policy discourse, and as such is seen as an a priori condition and thus rests beyond the focus of the present discussion.

Moving on, I should note that in the table (Table 3) of struggles and oppositions presented above, there is a significant but purposeful omission which is the cultural dimension of the Bologna policy discourse. This is due to the fact that culture moves in between and within all the levels of the spatial context, and also is embedded in all aspects of the societal implications. At the beginning of this section I noted that I would discuss the idea that BP policy discourse constructs an EU higher education policy regime that is embedded, and consists of what I named a condition of 'quality culture' in higher education. In this context and in order for a culture of quality to be established, power has to work in all spatial levels and dimensions of the societal implications. A way of accomplishing this is through regulatory mechanisms and policy technologies.

Thus far I have introduced two insights that are ingrained in the realisation processes of the Bologna policy discourse: a) the combined but also distinctive characteristics of both individualisation and totalisation, and b) the usage of regulatory mechanisms and policy techniques for the introduction of a 'quality

culture' regime. Before engaging in an elaboration of how the above two features work at the level of the Bologna policy realisation, I should also introduce a third insight that complicates and also gives a distinctive character to the Bologna policy realisation, which is the European and non-legislative constituent.

In my first attempt to describe the realisation of the Bologna policy using the first two insights, I found it useful to deploy on both descriptive and explanatory levels the Foucauldian concept of 'governmentality'. However, governmentality as a notion and concept is developed within a context of nation-state government. I viewed this as problematic in relation to the third feature of the Bologna policy realisation, that of non-legislative initiatives in EU higher education. At that point I decided to use a term deriving from the field of international relations and also heavily used in contemporary analysis of the nation-state, that of 'governance'. Thus, bringing together all the above-presented threads of my conceptualisation of the Bologna policy realisation, and probably in a playful way, I will explore the possibility of 'governmentality in a context of governance without government'.

## **Section 2: The Bologna Process: 'Governmentality in a context of Governance without Government'.**

Before entering into a discussion of how the notions of 'governmentality' and 'governance' can be employed in the study and analysis of the BP policy discourse, a brief presentation of the orientation of the terminology seems at this point unavoidable. Accordingly, I shall follow Foucault's assertion that 'governmentality' "marks the emergence of a distinctly new form of thinking about and exercising of power in certain societies" (Foucault, 1991c, 102-104). To this, Dean adds: "this form of power is bound up with the discovery of a new reality, the economy, and concerned with a new object, the population" (Dean, 1999, p.19). Governmentality for Foucault means the analysis of the 'how' of government. My position on governmentality in this research is focused on the policy techniques that are used for the realisation of the BP as an EU policy for higher education integration. These policy techniques, outlined in Ball's work (2003) were identified in the previous section as the distinctive features of the 'quality culture' discourse promoted by the BP discourse and are the market, managerialism and performativity. Within this context the notion of governmentality in this research is used to describe the mindset that is promoted by the BP discourse and its counter-discourses, and which is reflected in practice of HEIs' governance and the attitudes of their participants. I shall return to this extensively with an analytical application of governmentality to the BP policy discourse.

Rosenau (1992) writes in relation to governance:

Put more emphatically, governance is a system of rule that works only if it is accepted by the majority (or, at least, by the most powerful of those it affects), whereas governments can function even in the face of widespread opposition to their policies. In this sense governance is always

effective in performing the functions necessary to systematic persistence, else it is not conceived to exist (since instead of referring to ineffective governance, one speaks of anarchy and chaos) (p. 4-5).

The efficiency of governance is based both on the voluntary, non-legislative character of policies on the one hand and, on the other, on the material conditions that construct the panel of rules and regulations according to which institutions and individuals ought to operate for the attainment of order. The non-legislative character of EU policy initiatives has given rise to an extended use of the notion of 'governance' in EU studies, as a way of describing this new state of regulation. In relation to the European Integration mode of governance, Heritier comments that, "in recent years new modes of governance, not based on legislation and/or including private actors in policy formulation, have increased in salience in European policy making" (Heritier, 2003, p. 105-106). The new method of non-legislative policy formulation is primarily found in areas "related to employment policy, social policy, migration, criminal prosecution, and education" (ibid). There are two reasons for this, as Heritier notes: a) these areas are those in which "governments see their sovereignty endangered" (ibid), and b) "by avoiding legislation and dealing with these matters through voluntary accords, the self-regulation of private actors, or co-regulation if there are public and private actors it is hoped that decision-making processes will be speeded up and solutions appropriate to the complex nature of the problem will be arrived at"(ibid). Following Heritier's description of the EU governance condition, the normalisation of non-legislative policy initiatives as a new policy technology towards the exposure of the BP policy discourse over the voluntary participation in it of European nation-states becomes apparent.

For an overview of the development and the utility of the notion of governance, I shall present in (Table 4) Mayntz's scheme for the history of governance theory within EU studies, which is described as 'the Governance paradigm and its extensions' (Mayntz, 1998, p.11)



**Table 4: The Governance paradigm and its extensions**

Basic Paradigm:	Policy development (by government) + Policy implementation (by public agencies)
1 <sup>st</sup> extension:	Includes bottom-up perspective: sectoral structure and target group behaviour
2 <sup>nd</sup> extension:	Includes policy-development and implementation in public/private networks and self-regulating societal systems
3 <sup>rd</sup> extension:	Includes effect of European policy upon domestic sectoral structures and policy making
4 <sup>th</sup> extension:	Include European level of policy-making
5 <sup>th</sup> extension:	Includes political input processes on European and national level

Before moving on to discuss the insight that these analytical terms offer to the study of European Integration and to the BP as an EU education policy discourse on the integration of European higher education systems, I should point out a theoretical problem here. As discussed above, governmentality refers to how to think about government, to the mentalities that realise the 'conduct of conduct', and how to analyse and think of the action and 'art' of government. Thus, it is a notion that is placed within the function of the state. Governance, on the other hand, is not bound to any state authority but it is based on material conditions that set the rules of the 'conduct of conduct' and maintain the 'order'. As Rosenau points out, "It might even be said that governance is order plus intentionality" when "global order consists of those routinised arrangements

through which world politics gets from one moment in time to the next" (Rosenau, 1992, p.5).

The question that arises is how and whether governmentality could possibly be seen, placed and realised within a context of governance without government, when the development of the notion took place within an analysis of the nation-state and of the effective management of its population. There is a dual response to the above theoretical problematisation, which draws on a) the way that analytical problems, which derive from the study of the EU, can be tackled and b) the approach that I take towards the theoretical notions in use.

In relation to the first necessity regarding analytical issues, it is clear that the multiplicity of levels and dimensions included in EU studies and reflected in this research through the consideration of BP policy discourse requires the use of various and even diverse notions that provide insight into different aspects. For example, when discussing the multiplicity of perspectives, mainly due to a lack of substantial and concrete theorisation, regarding analytical approaches to EU study, Peterson argues that the point of unity for all is that:

If there is one tenet that now unites EU scholars it is that the Union is a polity that operates simultaneously at different levels. In Europe more than elsewhere the international, supranational, transnational, national, regional and sub-national are inextricably linked. Compared to other multilevel, quasi-federalist polities, the Union is unique in that different levels of EU governance are relatively clearly distinguished from one another, with their own resources and sources of legitimisation. ...But the choice is not between rival general or 'meta-theories' of European integration or EU governance (see Christiansen et al. 1999; Risser and Wiener 1999). Rather, it is about what, precisely, is being explained, and at what level of analysis in a system of government which is clearly and uniquely multi-tiered (Peterson, 2001, p. 290-291).

Regarding the second part of the response on the approach I adopt towards the theoretical notions in use, I shall call upon Foucault's proposition that his writings should be used as a toolbox rather than a comprehensive theory. This proposition was also adopted by Walters and Haahr (2005) in their work on governmentality within European integration. Hence, in an attempt to discuss the different types of power struggles within the different levels and dimensions of BP policy discourse, I focus on both 'governmentality' and 'governance', and employ them as diverse but also embracing concepts.

### **Governmentality and Governance within the Bologna Process: A Neo-Liberal Context**

Having set the descriptive context of the struggles entailed within the different levels and dimensions of the BP policy discourse, I have identified the features upon which the discursive analysis that will follow is based. In a summarised view these are, that the BP, in this research, is regarded as an EU education policy regime that aims to create a condition of 'quality culture' within EU and non-EU member states' higher education. In order to accomplish this, the BP policy discourse uses regulatory mechanisms for the management and organisation of the policy realisation, such as module and course accreditation at an institutional level, follow-up groups to the process at a European level and yearly conducted reports of the progression of the realisation of the process at the state level.

Moreover, the BP policy discourse encloses the combined but also distinctive characteristics of both individualisation and totalisation processes that are bound to power struggles, and primarily the type of struggles that are related to the 'submission of the subjectivity' (Foucault, 2000). As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, the processes of individualisation appear, on the one hand,

as part of the recently introduced neo-liberal approach that aims towards the introduction of a new cultural regime in most aspects of education, and evidently in higher education. On the other hand, the processes of totalisation become apparent from the voluntary participation in the BP policy initiative. Such participation is based on a regional discourse, which upholds the BP as not only being the best choice for higher education institutions in both EU and non-EU member states, but as the only path to being a successful participant in the global higher education competition. Thus, its distinguishing character is based on its regional non-legislative constituent. Moreover and for this reason, the conceptualisation of the BP policy discourse, in order to be descriptive and analytical, moves to neo-liberal approaches of government and the exploration of the possibility for this to be seen as what I will describe as 'governmentality in a context of governance without government'.

At this point it is only after first introducing a brief discussion on neo-liberalism that I can continue with the rest of the discussion. Neo-liberalism is regarded, in this research, as a mentality of government that emerges at a political level, and its traces are obvious and influence the institutional and the ethical level. The discussion that will follow is based on my attempt to connect outcomes deriving from my engagement with the data to a broader theoretical and analytical context.

### **The Discursive Context of Neo-Liberalism**

I shall start the presentation of the discursive context of neo-liberalism by introducing the work of Rose (1992) on what he called the 'enterprise culture'. Rose, in an attempt to engage with the workings of neo-liberalism in the three spheres of its influence, political, institutional and ethical, utilises a Foucauldian conceptualisation. The 'enterprise culture' becomes apparent through the interplay of the neo-liberal discourse within these three dimensions. Or, as Rose,

explains “‘enterprise culture’ can be understood in the particular connections that it establishes between” (Rose, 1992, p. 145) them.

In more detail, and within a Foucauldian appreciation, Rose presents a comprehensive description of the operational mode of neo-liberalism in the three spheres of its influence. On the political sphere the work of neo-liberalism can be traced through the exploration of mentalities of government, described by the notion of governmentality. In the context of European HE the notion of governmentality offers the means for an analytical approach to the political discourses embedded in the official BP documents, while tracing the ideological features of the discourse and their practical realisation as policy within HEIs.

At an institutional level the functioning of neo-liberalism can be followed through the study of institutions. As Rose suggests, this “entails construing institutions in a particular ‘technological’ way, that is, as ‘*human technologies*’” (Rose, 1992, p. 144). The human technologies

...are embodied in the design of institutional space, the arrangements of institutional time and activity, procedures of reward and punishment and the operation of systems of norms and judgements. They can be thought as technological in that they seek the calculated orchestration of the activities of the self (Rose, 1992, p. 144).

The framework of accepted actions and practices defined by the human technologies provides information not only for the institution and the social context that it serves but also for the subjectivities that the institutional discourse aims to construct. Within EHEA, the BP policy discourse, driven by a neo-liberal agenda, introduces, promotes and endorses certain ideological features identified within the institutional conduct. The institutional discourse which constructs the institutional conduct is transmitted to the conduct of the individuals participating in the institution. The notion of human technologies utilised by and

identified within HEIs acknowledges the form and essence of discipline within neo-liberalism that is not external to the body, but is rather internally expressed through the freedom of choice of the individual.

The mentality, however, that promotes particular choices and discourages others is part of the operation of the neo-liberal discourse on the ethical level. In other words, the neo-liberal discourse introduces different ethics within HEIs and their participants, where "...ethics are understood in a 'practical' way as modes of evaluating and acting upon one's self that have obtained in different historical periods" (Foucault 1988; see Rabinow 1984 referenced in Rose, 1992, p. 144). Concerning the ethical sphere, Foucault points to the application of the 'technologies of the self', of self-regulation and choices towards individual development, fulfilment and happiness. The technologies of the self are apprehended as the modes

which permit the individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 1988, p.18 quoted in Rose, 1992, p. 144).

'Autonomisation' and 'responsibilisation', are at the centre of what is demanded, in ethical terms, from institutions and individuals within a neo-liberal discourse. The importance of these two notions lies in the establishment, through the neo-liberalism discourse, of the condition of liberty, individual freedom and personal choice towards self-fulfilment.

Neo-liberalism works on different levels such as the political, as a political philosophy and perspective, aiming at the empowerment of the subject through the development of its sense of autonomy and responsibility; the institutional, based on the marketisation of the previously public welfare state provisions such

as education, health and pensions; and finally, on the ethical level, by constructing new values as it introduces new principles that rule the conduct of the subjects. Neo-liberalism aims at a cultural change that will be based on individual freedom, responsibility and choice and which is another way to construct the conduct of the population. Interestingly, the population, within this context, is expected to conform voluntarily to the new principles and values. For these reasons, and as Rose explains:

Neo-liberalism is thus more than a phenomenon at the level of political philosophy. It constitutes a mentality of government, a conception of how authorities should use their powers in order to improve national wellbeing, the ends they should seek, the evils they should avoid, the means they should use and, crucially, the nature of the persons upon whom they must act (Rose, 1992, p. 145).

The BP as higher education policy discourse emerges in an age when neo-liberal approaches are essential within political thought and actions. On the political level, the condition widely accepted as welfare state, according to the neo-liberal perspective and critique, appears as lacking efficiency due to its bureaucratic and centralised character. Dean (1999) describes the neo-liberal criticism of the welfare state as follows:

The welfare state was understood as a paternalist mechanism of social control, relying on a uniform provision that is bureaucratic, hierarchical, sometimes coercive and oppressive, and often unresponsive to the needs and differences of individuals and communities (Dean, 1999, p. 153-154)

The significant point in this critique is that it sets a context for the empowerment of the subject through individual choice based on the fundamental value of freedom. The welfare state is presumed to be as factor restraining individual development, and social welfare provision is regarded as negative feature in

relation to individuals' understanding of their citizen responsibility. The neo-liberal approach claims that the population of a state should gain responsibility for its actions and that citizens should not expect the state to contribute towards a solution of problems related to social provision. The state's central control and responsibility for the provision of social services should be replaced by quasi-markets in all public areas. That condition includes provisions of education, health and insurance, which adopt the principles of the market and business within a neo-liberal cultural context. Thus, areas that were previously part of the public provision by the welfare state now are relocated within quasi-markets for services, in a transformation of the institutional organisation of the nation-state. As neo-liberalism introduces market principles and structures in the spaces that formerly were occupied by an authoritarian state, the ethical dimension of the everyday conduct of the population is affected.

The empowerment and re-definition of the individual within the state in a neo-liberal approach comes through the discourses of citizenship, responsibilities, values and risks. These are introduced and promoted by the neo-liberal perspective as the means and basis for innovation, as part of and through a cultural change that aims at all dimensions of social life. Or, quoting Dean again, "the goal of neo-liberal critique of the welfare state is a displacement of social policy and social government by the task of cultural reformation" (Dean, 1999, p.172).

Moreover, some theoreticians (Rose 1996, Walters and Haahr 2005) move on to discuss the mentality of government introduced by neo-liberalism as 'advanced liberalism'. According to Walters and Haahr (2005)

Advanced liberalism is all about governing in ways which seek to elicit agency, enhance performance, celebrate excellence, promote enterprise, foster competition and harness its energies. ... It governs in the name of,



and through the mobilisation of the freedoms, choices, and desires of its subjects (Walters and Haahr, 2005, p.119).

Neo-liberalism can be described as a mentality of governance as it is not only supported by the state but also rests on the self-control of the individual. In this sense, globalisation driven governments appreciate the significance of markets in relation to efficiency and effectiveness, quality assurance, customer services as a positive move towards successful conduct and preservation of national, regional and global order. However, a common understanding has recently emerged that markets cannot be left as the only organising features of the global order, and the state reappears as a regulator of the free market. Regulations and provisions on the way markets operate are under discussion, by the G8 group in the global context, to regional or national economic policies and the construction of fair trade possibilities. On the other hand, self-regulation appears of great significance since the welfare state's social provision is continuously reduced. The diminution of social provision institutions, aiming to extinguish bureaucracy, causes considerable disturbances to subjects' notions of social ties and social bonding. This reorientation of the connection between individuals and society arises as the neo-liberal governmentality and the market promote an autonomous, individualised subject and construct a barricaded citizen; as the responsibility of individual choice affects not only the people within the a local context but also the global community; and as, at the same time, the freedom of that choice is limited and controlled by what the market offers and by the individual subjects' information, education, class orientation, religion, gender, race, ethnicity and adaptability to the neo-liberal culture. As a result, the term 'society' is significantly marginalized and the term 'community' is being introduced in political, economic and cultural discourses. Within this context Rose explains that:

although strategies of welfare sought to govern *through society*, 'advanced' liberal strategies of rule ask whether it is possible to govern

without *society*, that is to say, to govern through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents – citizens, consumers, parents, employers, managers, investors – and to govern through intensifying their allegiance to particular ‘communities’ (Rose, 1996, p. 61).

In this respect, Thatcher as the originator in England of neo-liberal mentality sought the non-existence of society, and, as she has put it, “economics are the method. The object is to change the soul” (Thatcher, 1988 quoted in Heelas and Morris, 1992, p. 7).

A different critique of the welfare state derives from Beck's and Giddens's theorisation of the ‘risk society’. Their analysis is based on the conceptualisation of the ‘end of nature’ and the ‘end of tradition’. Their suggestion for understanding current issues is based on the idea of risk at every level of life. Risks are at the base of every individual choice. The increase of risks is parallel to the need for increased individual choice. The risks that the population is facing at all levels derive from the fundamental assumption of modernity, that evolution and development are based on science and technology. However, the increased risks that mark the current era including the environmental degradation, the extended use of genetically modified organisms and the prevalence of epidemics, construct the need and the space for reflection on previous choices.

### **Institutional and Policy Governance in European Higher Education:**

Having set the context of the neo-liberal mentality of governance I shall continue the discussion on governance in relation to European higher education. I use the notion of governance in order to describe and discuss two different issues: a) institutional governance and b) policy governance. *Institutional governance* refers to the processes, practices and regulations that different European higher education institutions adopt in order to sustain their internal order and public existence. *Policy governance* refers to how different national policies are

operating under the same European policy umbrella, under the spectrum of European Integration on a broad level, and specifically the BP on an educational level.

Institutional governance has been the subject of both international relations theory and comparative studies; see, for example, Braun and Merrien (1999) who have developed the model of a triangle between the state, the market and the university, for the study of HEI governance. Several models of institutional governance have been developed reflecting the particular characteristics of HEIs in relation to the educational local context in which they appear. Most of the models of HEI's governance – the *colegium*, the *'bureaucratic – oligarchic'*, the *'market'* the *'new-managerialism'* governance models (Lazzeretti and Tavoletti, 2006) – were constructed through a comparative analysis of higher education systems and nation-states. They observe that the four modalities presented above certainly do not exhaust all the possible combinations that can be found in various European HEI's. However, Lazzeretti and Tavoletti suggest that a claim can be made that they are the most common. At that moment, education policy within different nation-states could be said to consist of different appreciations of higher education innovation features, primarily based on national, historical, cultural and economic features defined by local perspectives.

Interestingly, at the present moment and in my appreciation of the development and evolution of education policy within the EU framework and the European context, HEIs' governance is not based on their locality, either nation-state or city, but appears to be oriented more towards the translation of the region-based education policy guidelines, such as the BP policy discourse, by the HE institutional management with reference to each member-state's coordinating policy. What I am claiming here, and will explore in the following analytical chapter is that while the BP policy discourse promotes and has already created a strong argument of European education policy convergence, member-states and HEIs are bound to their voluntary commitment to work towards its realisation.

However, as discussed in the previous section, the realisation of the BP policy discourse at all levels has met struggles and is fundamentally based on the exploration and visibility of the differences between the various European HE systems. Nonetheless, the distinctive discursive characteristics of the BP that can be claimed are the actual and real features that make possible its realisation. These are i) the 'logic of no alternative', along with ii) the threat of the 'other' which is external to Europe and iii) the ideological features of economic globalisation. These three features included in the logic of both education policy and HEIs governance, construct the perception of a one-way choice as to how to tackle the threats and manage the risks that are coming to the European region, the member-states and the higher education systems.

Following the above conceptualisation, institutional governance can be seen and thought about in two ways, or, and that would highlight my personal appreciation, within each institution two different types of governance can be traced. The first type of institutional governance is locally targeted and state-oriented<sup>42</sup>. This would suggest that a HEI serves the locality in which it is found and operates according to the national educational policies and laws. For the identification of that type of governance, Lazzeretti's and Tavoletti's model would be efficient and more than valuable. However, in this research the interest in governance lies on the second type. The second type moves from the local/national necessities to be globally targeted and regionally oriented. In this mode of governance a EHEI holds a position within the global context of the HE market, serves the ideational of EHEA as part of the attempt to increase EHEIs 'competitiveness' and 'attractiveness' and operates according to the regionally defined policy initiatives and goals, namely the BP. In the following chapters, the two types of institutional governance will be demonstrated through the primary data.

What is being described as the two different types of institutional governance is linked in my appreciation to individualisation and totalisation features and

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<sup>42</sup> Very clear in the data from the former polytechnic in England related to the role of the institution.

processes of EHEIs within a type of governmentality in a neo-liberal discursive context. The individualisation of an HEI is seen as locally-oriented, when the institutions operate according to demands deriving from national interests or local needs. The totalisation of HEIs' governance is examined through the alteration of their focus on regional and globally influenced requirements, aiming at their competitive survival.

The other side of governance, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, is related to policy governance, and specifically, in this research, to European higher education policy. Policy governance within the content and context of the BP policy discourse is based, not only on European higher education policy convergence, but also on the voluntary acceptance of the policy guidelines. The fact that the member-states' ministers of education adopted guidelines leaves space for each member-state to construct the most suitable policies related to its own higher education system. For this reason, it can be claimed that reflexivity is part of the BP, as the realisation of the policy initiatives is allocated to the nation state.

The nature of the BP, which demonstrates regional guidelines versus national policies, creates space for various translations of the policy guidelines and various interpretations during the recontextualisation of the policy discourse. The peculiarity of the BP as policy discourse lies in the detailed description of the realisation of the objectives, i.e. ECTS and quality standards, which are located within the abstract and vague notion of the European Higher Education Area. The BP also frames the policy discourse at a regional level, but its realisation is bound to the national context as, "the European Union put forward some measures in education and training, but simultaneously reiterated in its literature, namely in the Treaties, that the formation of educational policies should remain at a national level" (Novoa, 2002, p.132). Thus the question of most significance at this point is, who is responsible for the translation of the policy from the regional to the national policy level? The answer to this would be 'policy actors'. But still

the questions remain as to who is defined as a 'policy actor' and as to whose interests are served. The degree of complexity embedded in any attempt to answer these questions is summarised in the following quotation from Peterson (2001):

Here we come to grips with what, above all else, makes EU governance so difficult to theorise about: EU politics is a battle in which a variety of different cleavages usually can be identified on any particular issue. To an unusual extent most key actors in EU politics simultaneously possess multiple interests or identities: national and supranational, sectoral and institutional, political and technical. Their actions may be motivated by different rationalities at different times. It is frequently difficult to predict how key actors will align themselves on any given issue or which battle along which cleavage will matter most in determining outcomes (p. 292-293).

What becomes clear is that the BP policy initiatives, seen through the spectrum of decision-making within the EU framework at the sub-systemic level, demonstrates a mode of policy governance based primarily on networking between various actors of interest. These actors include organisations such as the ERT, the European Commission, EULAC, Education International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences ENQA, CRE, UNICE, EURASHE, the National Unions of Students in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Bologna Follow-up Group, and the representatives and ministers of the signatory countries. As shown in the presentation and discussion of the official BP documents, their interactions have not always been harmonious. Each of these actors aims to defend their interests at the least possible cost, and seeks the best possible outcome. For this reason, even the decision to create the EHEA and its established means of realization are constantly under revision.

Apart from the complexity that derives from the multiplicity of actors, I should also note the complexity that lies in the interests which the key actors represent. It is common in some cases for one actor to adapt to various positions and interests<sup>43</sup>. For example, the Committee of University Rectors is mainly staffed by academics, who during the BP meetings and those of the follow-up groups, take over the role of policy negotiator between the national and regional levels. Moreover, there are numerous actors engaged with the BP. It is important to have an overview of how they are acting in the establishment of a regional policy discourse, for two reasons: a) this will offer an understanding of how it is possible to achieve policy governance without government in a regional, non-legislative context and b) the space of possibilities and limitations that is opening through such processes.

I shall continue the discussion with the first issue, concerning governance without government in a regional, non-legislative context. As stated in the methodology, I chose not to interview policy protagonists in my research, as I am much more concerned with the way the discourse appears at an institutional level and the processes of transformation that appear in the four HEIs of this research on the issues of quality assurance and institutional governance. However, for a perspective on the policy actors engaging with the 'Europeanisation of education' I shall draw upon the research work of Lawn and Lingard in which they identify the existence of a 'policy elite' within European education policy.

They appeared to constitute a form of policy elite in education, which has not surfaced into view in the study of education, an area which does not have the same regulatory or legal framework as key industrial or core public service governance in European law or institutionalisation. In

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<sup>43</sup> Apart from the multiplicity of positions that an actor may hold, and hence the different interests that may serve, from the primary data it is obvious that actors also have personal interests, constructed by other discourses, e.g. political and educational. These interests or perceptions may also be going against the main BP discourse in which these actors participate. However, their personal interests are rarely becoming part of the official policy agenda, and are rarely expressed, creating fragmentation in the subjectivity and possible agency of the actor. See, for example, data from Greece and particularly Jagger's comments from the old university.

certain circumstances, they acted like a new 'magistracy', channelling funding and discourse through participating in committees and mediating externally produced reports (Lawn and Lingard, 2002, p. 302).

This 'policy elite' identified in the European educational space by Lawn and Lingard has specific characteristics and is being established through particular activities, including the networking, lobbying and negotiating procedures. These policy actors can be identified as deans and managers and academics that have taken upon them the administration of the new type of governance, using consultative bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency, the Observatory for Borderless Higher Education, and representatives of industries such as the ERT.

As Lawn and Lingard suggest, these actors constitute

...a policy elite that acts across borders, displays a similar habitus, have a feel for the same policy game and are (as actors), in a sense, bearers of an emergent European educational policy and policy space. (ibid., p. 292)

Features of this embodied habitus are the linguistic terminology used within the European education policy discourse, and procedures of exclusion, prohibition, division, rejection, and opposition between true/false articulated within the discursive practices as identified by Sheridan (1990) and discussed in the context of the official BP documents in Chapter 2. Other embodied features, as also identified in previously in this chapter, are the ideological features of globalisation and the need for competition against a constructed 'Other'.

The second part of identified characteristics concerning the educational policy elite includes particular discursive activities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the BP policy discourse, even though it presents parallel or analogous ideological features with that of globalisation, only makes sense as a response to the education policy trends that the latter suggests. The BP appears as a regional



education policy discourse influenced by global education policy trends that aim to transform HEIs at the national level. The actors participating in the formation of policy initiatives are, then, charged with the recontextualisation of the discourse at two levels: a) the translation of the discourse from the context of global trends to that of regional initiatives, and b) the translation of the regional initiatives to national HE policies. In both cases, the transition of the discourse from the one level to the other is realised through continuous processes of lobbying, networking, bargaining and negotiations between the various actors. These processes are not easy, as the various actors have offered different perspectives and serve different interests. However, they all work under the same umbrella of constructing, as far as possible, a sole and unified policy in order to respond to global threats, utilising discourses of European identity and citizenship. As Rosamond interestingly notes:

More concretely, the argument builds the hypothesis that a) the deployment of ideas about globalisation has been central to the development of a particular notion of European identity among elite policy actors but that b) 'globalisation' remains contested within EU policy circles (Rosamond, 2001, p. 162).

This conceptual framework in which policy elites work at an EU, and moreover, at a European level, concerns the translation and transition of the discourse, from global demands to regional initiatives, and then from regional initiatives to national policies. These negotiations on policy initiatives are realised through networks, which in the BP case are identified as policy elite networks consisting of differentiated actors e.g. businesses, managers, ministers and academics. It will be argued in this section that these negotiating procedures construct policy regimes that aim to lead to European HE policy governance. But let us have a closer look.

The fundamental question, at this stage, concerning the translation and transition of the discourse lies, to the extent that a regional initiatives aim to serve differentiated and specific local needs, at the nation-state level when they derive from a global dimension. The differentiation in the policy initiatives outlook between the global and the national level is what Rosamond describes as a fluid conception of multilevel governance:

...multilevel governance should mean rather more than the idea that the EU system is composed of distinct policy-making levels. Rather it should be used to explore the EU as a highly fluid system of governance, characterized by the complex interpretation of the national, sub-national and supranational; as a multi-perspectival domain of complex overlapping spaces with a multi-level institutional architecture and a dispersion of authority (Rosamond, 2001, p.160)

Similarly Peterson and Bomberg remark that:

Arguably, the ubiquity of policy networks in EU decision-making reflects a more general shift in international relations 'away from the state – up, down, and sideways – to supra-state, sub-state, and, above all, non-state actors' (Slaughter, 1997, p. 183 quoted in Peterson and Bomberg, 1999, p. 268).

Moving on, the translation or recontextualisation of the discourse is embedded in the construction of the idea of the EHEA as an area of highly competitive and attractive HEIs in the global HE context. The restructuring of local institutions due to global imperatives can be described as what Santos, (1995) calls 'localised globalism' while distinguishing between two forms of globalisation

The first one I will call *globalised localism*. It consists of the process by which a given local phenomenon is successfully globalised, ...The second form of

globalisation I would call localised globalism. It consists of the specific impact of transnational practices and imperatives on local conditions that are thereby destructured and restructured in order to respond to transnational imperatives (p. 263).

This logic is evident among the policy elite actors, as shown by the work of Lawn and Lingard, 2002.

The significant concerns of these actors were illuminated by reference to the non-national influences that had been and were continuing to intrude into the national space of education. The interviews also revealed the actors themselves as bearers of a new policy space in education. ... Initially, the responses, collected in the national context, assumed a local response to outsider pressures (p. 294)

This account describes a form of European policy governance, realised through policy networks and policy negotiations with global effects at the regional and national level. Although in the previous section I discussed a certain level of fragmentation within education policy at a local, national, regional and global level, and the struggles within the realisation of the BP policy discourse, the work of the policy elite networks for the translation of the discourse is believed by some theorists (Santos, Rosamond) used in this section to offer a space for the construction and elaboration of counter-discourses. This process can be summarised in what Bernstein (1996) wrote regarding the recontextualisation of discourses, that "every time a discourse moves, there is always space for ideology to play" (Bernstein, 1996, p.24). The sub-systemic level of decision-making offers space for different voices and ideologies, expressed through different networks. It is the level where agency has the space to introduce regional or national features to the discourse.

Nevertheless, the space for agency identified at the moment of the recontextualisation of the discourse is still problematic as it suffers limitations, and this brings us to the second part of our discussion concerning the possibilities and limitations of governance without government. The first identified limitation is the neo-liberal logic of the current global HE discourse and of the BP policy discourse accordingly, discussed in previous sections. Specifically, in the case of the BP that is being examined here, the recontextualisation of the discourse is controlled by policy elite networks framed within a neo-liberal agenda. As Peterson and Bomberg (1999) also noted in relation to voices that are being heard at the policy-shaping level:

Most of the EU's remains fundamentally neo-liberal, thus privileging narrow interests over broad ones, and producers over consumers (p. 271).

The next set of problematisations lies in the relationship between neo-liberalism, as a mode of governmentality in a context of governance without government and its democratic deficit within the EHE policy context. Interestingly, BP policy discourse placed at the level of policy-shaping opens a space for agency, through the on-going negotiations between the policy elite actors. However, the discursive procedures offer a limited space for what is accepted as valid argumentation during the negotiations. Moreover, negotiations serve specific interests which also have to be set within the mentality of the discourse. It is at this point that the issues concerning democratic procedures at a European level are at stake. Serving, in this case, particular market-oriented interests in relation to HE, it is questionable to what extent the elite policy actors are actually serving or representing the interests of the European community that participates in HE. The lack of central control concerning the procedures of the regional initiatives is problematic. Quoting Peterson and Bomberg again, the notion of governance without government is challenged precisely because:

One of the fundamental problems of governance in a 'differentiated polity' is ensuring that policy specialists do not govern in ways that violate the collective interests of the polity (Ibid., p. 269).

It is an analogous problem to that of discourse while discussing possibilities or spaces of oppositional discourses and agency. How is it possible to achieve the space for the defence of collective interests when the discursive power allows only oppositions within the limits of the neo-liberal mentality? As soon as the policy actors move outside the ideological margins of the discourse, their space of agency instantly disappears. In an EU policy decision-making process, the theoretical concern is translated to a practical barrier leading to democratic deficit at different levels.

The first level is related to the lack of wide participation within the policy decision-making. The actors participating in the BP, as has already been discussed, are numerous. However, they either share the same discursive understanding of the process or they perceive it in a context of no alternative (Racke 2006, RavineT 2006). In any case, they are trapped within the neo-liberal ideology underlying the discourse.

Because the key advances in European integration over the last decade have been linked to a neo-liberal agenda, the EU has progressed towards the goal of a regional marketplace, yet federal political institutions comparable in capacity and size to the internal market have not been established. Because social democracy depends on state power, it must either reassert national autonomy with all the problems entailed by this strategy or work towards a federalist system to re-regulate the economy at the level of EU (Cafruny, 1997, p.122).

Moreover, and as it will be shown in the discussion of the data<sup>44</sup>, most of the HEIs' participants who were interviewed felt no connection with the discourse at a regional level, and thus they perceived the discourse as not relating to them. In a broader EU context, this relates to what O'Dowd (2001) describes as the absence of popular participation in the EU processes due to the lack of identified borders that would suggest a conceptual framework of unity at a European level.

The well-documented lack of popular identification with, or allegiance to, the EU has much to do with how its internal and external borders are being constructed. ...By the same token its multi-level governance and differentiated borders provide little stimulus to mass participation or popular democracy. Its construction, even at its differentiated borders, is driven by elites and they remain its strongest advocates (O'Dowd, 2001, p. 107-108)

The representation of interests within the EU context and in the context of the BP, as shown also in the discussion of the official documents (Chapter 2) through policy elite networks within an neo-liberal discourse, raises questions in relation to "the economic and social disparities between the more and the less-developed regions or countries of the community (Santos, 1995, p. 286) and also in relation to the social legitimacy of those interests.

Concluding this section, I will argue that the BP, at the time that this research is being conducted, appears to be a process that lacks direct democratic control over and participation in the actual processes of governance (Santos, 1995). Moreover, the HE policy governance that is established through the BP is articulated through regimes of power, policy and culture. Where regimes are identified as organised institutionalised practices, "if the latter term means the routinised and ritualised way we do these things in certain places and at certain

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<sup>44</sup> Most of the interviewees, asked how far they feel themselves to be European citizens, dismissed the question as invalid. Europe was identified as a geographical space and not as a conceptual space, to which they could relate as decisive for their identity. This type of answer cannot be generalised to other European countries as, to a great extent, both England and Greece demonstrate peculiar relationships with the EU.

times" (Dean, 1999, p. 21). The defining feature of European regimes is that they are seen "as social institutions around which expectations converge around issue-areas" (Christiansen, T., Jørgensen, K.E., Wiener, 2001, p.6). Rosenau (1992) describes the way in which regimes operate towards the establishment of governance as follows:

...governance in global order is not confined to a single sphere of endeavour. It refers to the arrangements that prevail in the lacunae between regimes and, perhaps more importantly, to the principles, norms, rules, and procedures that come into play when two or more regimes overlap, conflict, or otherwise require arrangements that facilitate accommodation among the competing interests (p. 9).

Finally, the BP, as a modality of policy governance without government driven by neo-liberal governmentality, is bound to two alternatives which could overcome the problems of interest representation and popular democratic participation. The first would be the prioritisation of nation-state policy peculiarities within the process. At present, the EHE policy discourse, even though modified from the global level to the regional and finally to the national and local levels, still remains a rather top-down discourse. It is within the process of recontextualisation that nation-states engage in a more official form as regulators of the negotiations of interests. In that way, as Santos notes a balanced representation of interests might be achieved

if so, the preservation of the nation-states as key actors in the process of integration may provide, ironically enough, a safety valve against the consequences of greatly unbalanced representations of interests at the community level (Santos, 1995, p. 287).

The second option would be for the BP to develop a more official institutionalisation. In fact as far as anyone can possibly suggest for an on-going

process, institutionalisation is precisely the direction that the BP is moving towards in order to sustain the possibility for the creation of the EHEA. The construction of official institutionalised procedures, within legislative regulations, allows not only space for a more democratic operation within the European and EU context but also a chance of achieving the EHEA aims. Otherwise, as Cafruny (1997) explains, EHEA will be part of

A neo-liberal Europe of the future is, however, likely to be poorer and less competitive. Lacking strong federalist institutions and social solidarity, it will be unable to exert much influence over U.S. policy and international capital markets. European institutions will remain weak and poorly legitimised, paralysed by a dangerous and mutually reinforcing combination of market rationality and resurgent nationalism (p.124).



## **Part C: Discourse as an Analytical Tool**

The analytical part presented here is mainly concerned with the exploration of the notion of discourse as an analytical tool. Thus at this point I will propose a device for analysing policy discourses based on the recontextualisation of the BP discourse from a global to a regional, national and finally institutional level, derived from the data collected for this research. In more detail, in the previous theoretical part (Part B) I draw elements that arose from the primary data. However, these were generalised and located within the regional, national and institutional context at a macro level of policy analysis. I shall move now to the micro level of analysis, following a 'bottom-up' appreciation of the changes within HEIs and their interaction with the BP policy discourse on every level; regional, national, institutional. I shall also focus on the individual interviewees, in order to voice their position within the constant recontextualisation of the policy discourse. The above attempt will be framed around the issues of quality and governance, aiming to offer accordingly a 'bottom-up' account of them. This final part is structured following the same pattern used in the previous ones. Hence, it divided into two sections i) the content of discourse and ii) the concept of discourse.

### **Chapter 5: Content of Discourse**

In this chapter, I will present the emergence of the analytical tools through the data coding. From the process of coding of data I identified analytical categories. Subsequently, these categories were seen in relation to theory and led to the analytical framework presented below. Finally, the analytical framework consists of a descriptive scheme for the relationship between the analytical concepts within discourse-based research.

## **Data Coding and Analytical Tools**

While working with the collected data (in audio format) I began to recognise certain categories, which were introduced by most of my interviewees. However, although the thematics that were discussed during the interviews were more or less the same, the interviewees' approaches to them or the significance that was given to each one of them were very different. It became apparent that the interviewees' responses reflected their position in the institution, as an academic, administrator or student; the department in which they were located, humanities or science; the years they had spent in the institution, and the type of the institution itself, either old university or former polytechnic.

From the first reading of the data, three categories were identified as of great importance for the coding of the data and the analysis: a) the themes for discussion that were dominant during the interview, b) the type of institution and c) what was said by the interviewees in relation to their position in the institution. These three categories are identified in the construction of the analytical framework as a) discourses, b) institutional status and c) the voices of the participants perceived as the way in which their position in relation to the policy process is constructed by the policy and institutional discourse. I shall first describe each category and then move on to their interrelations, which establish my analytical framework.

### **Discourses**

As stated in the previous chapters, in this research the BP is regarded as an education policy, and moreover as an education policy discourse. Two features

of the EHEA are its obscurity and complexity as a policy discourse. Firstly, EHEA policy discourse embraces a whole range of the current global orthodoxies concerning higher education, such as quality assurance, qualifications, HE governance, and also regional issues such as recognition of degrees by the countries within the BP and mobility. Secondly, although constructed at the regional EU level, its realisation as policy occurs not only at the state level but also at the institutional level.

In relation to the first feature mentioned above, what appears to happen is that the EHEA is the main EU education policy discourse, which has been willingly adopted by the EU and non-EU member states that have signed the Bologna Declaration. Nevertheless, as shown in both previous chapters, the BP policy discourse is the outcome of an amalgamation of various HE-related discourses which are demonstrated in different modes at the various levels of recontextualisation of the policy discourse. Hence, the *main discourse*, within the process of realisation, is reduced to smaller, *secondary discourses*. Secondary discourses appear as education policies at the state level and moving down to an institutional level. The outcome of secondary discourses on the everyday reality for an institution can be seen through the *tertiary discourses*. These are discourses concerned with quality assurance, with meeting the standards of a good institution, funding, research and divergences between academics and administrative staff. These are also the discourses that are more commonly recognised, understood and appreciated by most of the participants in an institution, as they are part of the participants' everyday reality in the HEI. For example, in relation to quality, participants in HEIs might not know the official documents on quality, but, each one of them deals with quality forms in their everyday reality in the institution.

Moving on to the second feature, I will propose a way of thinking about EHEA as policy discourse at different levels: the main discourse works at the regional EU

level, the secondary discourse at the state level and the tertiary at that of the institution. Main, secondary and tertiary discourses are highly interrelated and imbricated. Interestingly, now they are recontextualised at any level depends on the educational features of the state and the status of the institution.

### **Institutional status**

When I use the term 'institutional status' in this research I will be referring to the type of institution. Explicitly, I will refer to whether a specific institution has always been a university or whether it has been upgraded at a certain point from a different higher institution to a university. The status of an institution is indicated by the values that the institution and its personnel acknowledge as guiding its functioning. The significance of institutional status lies in the way that institutions, according to their values and their inner structure, reflect, comprehend and recontextualise policy discourses and the changes that are brought through them.

### **Voice of the agent**

The 'voice of the agent' refers to the position of the participants in a higher education institution and how it is constructed by the policy discourse and its counter discourses. The participants' position in this case has been elicited in the interviews. The perspectives each interviewee as a member of the higher education community is guided, as mentioned earlier, by the type of the institution, the department they belong to and their position in the institution. Although using the pattern described here might be expected that, when applied, could predict the opinions of most of the interviewees, this is not the case as other factors such as political, social and personal values influence their primary opinions. It appeared that the interviewees, while engaging in a discussion

concerning the BP discourse and in order to be reflective about the same discourse that constructs both their academic subjectivity and the institutional reality they experienced, draw from other discourses – political, pedagogical, and philosophical - that have an input in the construction of their subjectivities beyond the HEI environment. As also discussed concerning the theoretical appreciation of the concept of discourse, the space for their agency is limited. However, the interviewees in their attempt to open a space that will allow them to reflect to the discourse, utilised ideas, terminology and values that are not embedded within the BP discourse but are part of other aspects of their reality. In such a way they manage to explore and interrogate the policy process on the different levels of its institutional realisation.

### **The Model of Analysis**

The three categories presented above as the outcome of the data coding provide the main tools for the data analysis. In an attempt to organise them in a way that represents their interrelations I devised the following table (See Table 5). Table 5 is organised according to specified features in the vertical and horizontal lines. Vertically, in the first box is the notion of 'discourse' (*this is the discourse of globalisation, economic competition and regionalisation from which the EHEA discourse arose*) but it is subsumed as in each part of the analysis the elements of the discourse change as it refers to specific and differentiated positions and conditions.

There are three types of discourse used, according to the positions, as analytical tools. The first of these is the main discourse, which consists of a number of official BP documents addressing the creation of EHEA. Then there are the secondary discourses that are conducted through each state's education policy regarding the EHEA. There are also the tertiary discourses, which are embedded

in the policy realisation process in each institution. Finally, as is highlighted by their description, these discourses – main, secondary and tertiary – appear at different levels – regional, state and institutional – which can be referred to as levels of coherence and specification of the discourse.

**Table 5: Model of analysis**

<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Institutional Status</b> (Type of Institution)	<b>Voice of agents</b> (Agent's institutional position)
<b>Main Discourse</b> (EU level)	<i>Institutional Positioning</i>	<i>Agent's Positioning</i>
<b>Secondary Discourse</b> (State level)		
<b>Tertiary Discourse</b> (Institutional level)		

Read horizontally, Table 5 presents 'discourse' as an analytical tool that illuminates the processes of policy realisation by uncovering its effects on the elements that it is applied to, which, in this case, are the institutions and the agents. However, policy processes and effects are differentiated according to the interplay of the discourse with either the institutional status or the agent's institutional position. Institutional status is defined, by the position of an institution in relation to its position in the HE space, in local and European context, and to the values which it represents. The agent's institutional position is that which each of the interviewees held in their institution, e.g. Head of a Department, Dean, Chancellor, academic, administrative personnel.

The empty boxes in Table 5 represent the changeable relationship of the analytical tools when they are combined. The relationship changes according to the analytical tools' specific features, which describe their position and identity, in relation to the level of their attachment to each account of discourse. In a more straightforward way, the empty boxes present the position of each institution or each agent in relation to each account of discourse, after their own characteristics are considered.

The model aims to show how the discourse of quality for HE at the tertiary level may be analysed in a context of neo-liberal governmentality and quality culture. Two issues will be discussed analytically in the following section: those of quality assurance and governance. The focus will be at the institutional level.

### **Analytical Treatment of the Interviews**

The conduct of the interviews was based on a process of multiple adaptations to the discourses that expressed the interpretations and perspectives of the interviewees. In analytical terms, the interviews were treated as discourses. They are disjointed spaces that offer different realities, sometimes similar to each other and sometimes oppositional, contradicting and incoherent. These spaces refer to the natural places where the interview was conducted

The spaces into which we have been invited provide recuperation, resistance, and the makings of "home". They are not just a set of geographic/spatial arrangements, they are theoretical, analytic and spatial displacements – a crack, a fissure in an organisation or in a community. Individual dreams, collective work and critical thoughts are smuggled in and then re-imagined (Fine et al., 2000, p. 122).

Or they may be discursive, interpretive and representative spaces that are opened to the researcher:

An alternative approach treats interview data as accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds. This narrative approach claims that, by abandoning the attempt to treat respondents' accounts as potentially 'true' pictures of 'reality', we open up for analysis the culturally rich methods through which interviewers and interviewees, in concert, generate plausible accounts of the world (Silverman, 2000, 823).

In addition, the interviews are not seen as the product of a sole person. A discursively dialectical process, takes place and the input of the interviewer carries the same weight as that of the interviewee. As much as I tried to stay 'invisible' during that process, no claim can be made that the interviews were not influenced by my perspective on the discourse, my questions and the way I led the discussions. And I would support, in relation to this research, the idea presented by Fontana and Frey (2000), who regard interviews as 'negotiated accomplishments':

There is a growing realisation that interviewers are not the mythical, neutral tools envisioned by survey research. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in interactions with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place. As Schwandt (1997) notes, "it has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually rounded and jointly structured by interviewer and respondent (Schwandt, 1997, p.79 quoted in/ and Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 647).



The process of interviewing not only created new knowledge through discursive negotiations but also offered different understandings and voices. These will be presented in the data analysis, since they had a significant influence upon my appreciation of the Bologna Process policy discourse, theoretically and analytically. Moreover, the interaction between primary and secondary data in addition to the understanding deriving from my interpretation of the discourse has worked in a constantly constructive and re-constructive way for the evolution of the research and the writing of the thesis.

In a more detailed view, analysis of the secondary official documents located the features of the Bologna Process policy discourse. The primary data offered not only the interpretations made by the HEIs' participants, but also the stance that the institutions took on the policy initiatives. In these ways, the theoretical appreciation of this research that is presented in the following chapter (Chapter 6) consists of and is generated by the simultaneous analytical treatment of both secondary and primary data.

### **Mapping the Data** <sup>45</sup>

At this point I will present the data as collected in each country. First, I will present the data collection in Greece, and then in England, while also offering basic information regarding the institutions.

#### **Greece**

I now move on to the discussion of the data collected in the Greek interviews. The Greek data consists of 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in September 2003. The interviews were conducted in two Greek higher education institutions, a

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<sup>45</sup> A discussion concerned with the methodological aspect, of the data collection, that is the selection of countries and institutions, the pilot, the conduct of the interviews and finally, analytical and ethical concerns can be found in Appendix 2.

former TEI which is now an ATEI (the equivalent of a former polytechnic in England) and an old university. The interviews were conducted mainly with people (24 in total) from two departments within each institution, the one in the field of social sciences and the other in the field of engineering. Additionally, some interviews (6 in total) were conducted with people who held positions in the main administration of the institution. The sample of interviewees consists of three categories, a) academics, b) administrators and c) students.

Schematically the sample appears in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Table 6 presents the interviewees from the old university (AEI) in relation to their department and the position they hold in it. Table 7 presents in the same way the sample from the former polytechnic (ATEI).

**Table 6: Sample from the Old University - AEI**

<b>AEI</b>	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Electrical Engineers</b>				
	Anderson	Griffith		
	Grunt		Kika	
	Morrissey		Vivien	
<b>Computer Engineers</b>				
	Cusak	Campell	Stefany	
<b>Early Childhood Education</b>				
	Michael		Olia	
			Iris	
<b>Main administration</b>				
	Jagger	Penn		
	Spacey	Kristofferson		
				16

The box that probably needs further clarification in the two tables is concerned with the interviewees who are described as academics and members of the main administration. These are academics who have held administrative positions for some time such as the Dean, President or Vice President of the institution. Finally,

Table 8 presents a numerical view of the sample in relation to the position they hold in their department and their institution.

**Table 7: Sample from the Former Polytechnic” – ATEI**

<b>ATEI</b>	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Electrical Engineers</b>	Vicious	O'Donnell	Pam	
	Hoffman		Noris	
	Kein		Patricia	
<b>Social serv.</b>	Garbo		Cyrus	
	Lopez		Alanis	
			Erica	
<b>Logotherapy</b>				
<b>Main adm</b>	Kravitz	Monroe		
<b>Total</b>				14

**Table 8: numerical view of the Greek sample**

<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>Old university/ AEI</b>		<b>New university/ TEI</b>		<b>Greece</b>
Department	Electrical Engineers	Early Education	Electricians	Social Care	<b>TOTAL</b>
Academics	3	2	3	2	10
Department Administrative staff	1	1	1		3
Students	2	3	3	3	11
Central Administration	2		1		3
Dean/President	2		1		3
<b>Total</b>	16		14		30

For the data examination the interviews were partly transcribed and partly translated as they were conducted in Greek. This decision was made on time limitation due to the length of the interviews.

## England

As already mentioned, the research structure is the same in both countries. In England I have completed nineteen interviews in two higher education institutions – an old university and a former polytechnic. In the old university the interviewees were located within the School of Education though in the former polytechnic the interviewees are located within two different departments; social sciences and engineering. As noted previously, I did not conduct interviews with students in England. That was due to the lack of understanding on their part of general HE policy issues and their connection with the Bologna Process, which made the discussion difficult and uncomfortable for me and for them. In addition, most of the interviewees in England discouraged me from interviewing students since they believed that most of the students would not be able to answer or express an opinion on most of my interview themes. Moreover, as Table 9 shows there are no interviews in the old university that are located in a non-educational department. My efforts to get the cooperation of the academics from other fields were not fruitful, no-one accepted to participate in the research. The interviews in England took place between 2004 and 2005.

**Table 9: Sample from the Old University**

	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Christopher Lee		
	Miranda Otto		
<b>School of Education</b>	Orlando Bloom	Maggie Smith	
	Mini Anden		
	Nerissa Tedesco		
	Meg Ryan		
<b>Main adm.</b>	Ian McKellen		
<b>Total</b>			8

**Table 10: Sample from the Former Polytechnic”**

	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Engineers</b>	Matt Damon		
	Brad Pitt		
	Abdy Garcia		
<b>Social sciences</b>	Billy Boyd	Liz Taylor	
	Vigo Mortensen		
	Elijah Wood		
	Isabel Lahiri		
	Natalie Portman		
	George Clooney		
<b>Main adm</b>	Cate Blanchett		
<b>Total</b>			11

Tables 9 and 10 present the interviewees and the position they hold in their institution. Table 9 represents the sample from the old university and Table 10 from the former polytechnic accordingly. Table 11 presents the numerical view of the sample in relation to the position they hold in their department and their institution in England.

**Table 11: numerical view of the English sample**

<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>Old university</b>	<b>Former Polytechnic</b>		<b>England</b>
Department	Education	Engineers	Social Sciences	<b>TOTAL</b>
Academics	6	3	6	15
Department Administrative staff	1		1	2
Dean/President	1		1	2
<b>Total</b>	8		11	19

## **Chapter 6: Concept of Discourse**

The first section of this chapter will discuss perceptions of the quality assurance discourse in each of the four institutions under research. First, I will discuss those that are located in England, and then those located in Greece. In addition, quality will be discussed in relation to each procedural and operational appearance, meaning both internal quality mechanisms and external bodies' evaluation of the institution.

The second section will offer an overview of HEIs governance approaches in relation to the realisation of the BP initiatives, and will also differentiate the level of engagement that each institution appears to have with the BP policy discourse.

### **Section 1: Higher Education Institutions' Quality in the Bologna Process**

Before starting the discussion on quality within the different institutions and the different national contexts where they are located, I shall briefly present the European – BP approach on quality, and also re-state in a summary how the quality discourse is being established within the EHEA policy discourse, what are its ends and means and how it has been thought of conceptually in this research.

The first statement concerning EHEIs quality assurance can be found in the Bologna Declaration itself, as one of its specified objectives is the “promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparative criteria and methodologies” (Bologna Declaration, 1999). Subsequently, the “Follow up on the Bologna Declaration: a European Quality Assurance” (2001) was released as a ‘position paper of the steering group of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)’. The ENQA states that, although quality assurance must be one of the primary

objectives of the attempt to create the EHEA, it should be developed through national context-related procedures in each EU member state:

However, the steering group also recognises that the national systems have, as a general rule, developed their procedures and methodologies with a focus on their own national educational arrangements. The steering group is fully aware that the new developments challenge the purely national context for quality assurance (p. 3).

Additionally, ENQA suggests that 'accreditation' is part of the quality assurance process, explaining:

The seminar also concluded that accreditation should not be viewed as an end itself but rather as one of a number of possible components in a European approach on quality assurance (p.4).

Nonetheless, the ENQA proposes, as part of accreditation, the establishment of specific criteria/standards as characteristics which eventually assure quality:

The defining characteristic of accreditation is that the process is based on established standards/criteria and that the result of the process is a decision – 'yes' or 'no' – as to answer these standards have in fact been met by the institution or programme under accreditation. Whether labelled accreditation or something different, the important thing is that the method used is based on agreed and published standards and makes a formal codified statement about whether or not the evaluated objects meet these standards (p.4).

Interestingly, although the ENQA group recognises accreditation as part of the European quality assurance process, and promotes the national organisation of accreditation and quality assurance agencies, the group, also explains that further action has been taken on the issue:

Non-governmental accreditation programs have already been established in Europe and accreditation agencies based in the United States are also active here. But the steering group wishes to emphasise that any more general approach towards accreditation in Europe should be an integrated development from existing quality assurance structures and should not be an additional obligation for institutions of higher education. It is on this basis that the steering group supports the initialisation of a common European framework for quality assurance to look into the possibilities for accreditation (p.7).

Finally, the Prague Communiqué (2001) stated as an objective the “promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance”, affirming that:

Ministers recognized the vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe...Ministers called upon the universities and other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in cooperation with corresponding bodies from countries which are not members of ENQA, to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice.

The above quotations come from documents which are part of the production of the EHEA discourse. Within these quotations can be seen the official representation and disposition of the ‘quality assurance’ (QA) discourse.



Discussing the QA discourse in relation to the analytic device presented earlier (see Table 11), it appears as one of the secondary discourses that construct the main EHEA discourse. As such, the QA discourse absorbs from the main discourse its European characteristics of concern for the coordination and communication in quality issues. However, the way that quality will be promoted in each of the EU member states is to be decided, as shown from the above quotations, in their own national educational context. Moreover, the ENQA realises the already existing pressure on quality which the European HEIs are facing within their national context, and proposes the coordination of already established national evaluative structures in order to avoid the introduction of further obligations to the institutions. In addition, the ENQA calls the EHIs to follow the already established accreditation programmes established in Europe and in the US, introducing in this way global HE trends into regional initiatives.

Finally, the discussions presented here should be seen in relation to conclusions that have been drawn in previous sections in this research. Specifically, the analysis takes into consideration global HE policy trends, how the BP policy discourse depends and responds to these trends, the prioritisation of the discourse on quality and the move towards a quality culture within a context of neo-liberal governmentality.

### **The English Quality Context**

As has already been discussed in previous sections, England is one of the leading countries in relation to quality assurance mechanisms, for both the evaluation and preservation of quality. Morley (2004), in her work on quality, describes clearly the bureaucracy developed for these extended quality measurements. Within the BP context, England has been one of the innovators in the construction of a common framework or common agency of accreditation and quality standards for EHIs as it is the country that can offer extended

experience on the issue. In addition, the assurance of quality in England is also ahead in moving fast towards TQM modes. England has always attracted foreign students, and due to this it can be claimed that English HEIs are familiarised with education market features such as the attraction of students usually seen as customers. It has strong links with industry with regard to the qualifications offered to its graduates. In the English context my aim is to show how academics, as experienced in relation to quality management, have interpreted and perceived the intensified quality procedures. English academics are a step ahead as they have seen the 'good' and the 'bad' aspects of the QA procedures, since the Quality Assurance Agency has operated for several years as an independent evaluative institution. Finally, this is a significant difference between the two countries under research as the one is seen as experienced with QAA procedures and the other was, at the time of the data collection, in the process of creating a national quality assurance agency.

### **The Old University: England**

I shall start with discussing internal and external quality in the old university. The interviewees spent a considerable amount of time explaining the processes for promoting internal quality in the institution, and they all stated that these are a set of rather painful, bureaucratic procedures but still unavoidable. In my attempt to locate a participant closer to the organisation of the quality assurance management processes, I spoke with Orlando Bloom<sup>46</sup>.

One of Orlando Bloom's responsibilities in the old university is to try to ensure quality control for all PhDs. He illustrates the struggle between the internal and external quality procedures by demonstrating their "top-down" control.

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<sup>46</sup> The coding names of the interviewees are the names of actors and singers – there is no connection to the real people, and they were chosen purely on the basis that it was easier to the researcher to remember them and assuming that might end up being reader friendly.

... [There] is quite a complex, sophisticated system to ensure quality control for PhDs and another of my tasks here... is the PhD submission rates... at four years ... we now have a regulation that no full-time students can be registered for more than four years.

All of these things we have taken ourselves... but the QAA has begun to become increasingly active in ... quality control for PhD students and they have ... introduced certain policy documents about what they require.

In a sense increasingly the QAA provides the structure and which within the individual universities have to operate and then how individual schools and departments have to operate, so there is a structured "top-down" quality control. The quality assurance process tries to ensure a minimum standard of quality of PhD...Of course it is still possible that the intellectual quality of a PhD is terrible. You can never control for that. All you can do in these things is to [create] a secure passage, procedures and control, which provide... hmmm... if you like a scaffold ... a framework which you hope will ensure a certain minimum level of quality in terms of procedures and processes. You cannot ensure quality, it is very difficult, in terms of the content itself.

In the old university the internal quality procedures are structured in such a way that they can be adapted to the QAA requirements. However, even through the scrutinising control of the QAA operates within the old university, the intellectual and academic quality of a PhD cannot be ensured. That is bound to the personal work of students and supervisors who, even when they follow the personalised assessment procedures, may overcome the bureaucracy leading to standardised quality and not ensure a desirable outcome. This point raises issues related to both EHEA and the ERA, since one of their main aims is to ensure and promote the intellectual quality of PhD work as the basis for the creation of highly skilled researchers. What is one of the most striking outcomes is that bureaucratic processes and procedures, affecting operational matters, undermine the substantial value of academic work.

The same point was clearly stated in my discussion with Christopher Lee, an academic in the field of ICT in Education, concerning external quality in the old university. Christopher Lee quite cynically described his experience during the Quality Assurance Association (QAA) assessment:

...The QAA examined the department last year and that was a major exercise obviously...

Q: Major exercise? What do you mean? I want your personal opinion on that one.

A: We had to prepare 72 boxes of written material.

Q: I am sorry?

A: 72 Boxes

Q: what do you mean by boxes?

A: I mean, the amount of material they wanted filled 72 of those (*he showed me a box of files*)

Q: 72? What did they ask for?

A: You can see on their web site, they have a list of what they ask for. But it is very exhausting. We had to open a room specially to store all this information...

The old university's staff presented in general a frustrated approach to quality in practical terms. As mentioned earlier, most of the interviewees offered an account of the processes but very few offered a personalised opinion. Presenting a politicised view or criticising their own institution was beyond the limits of the interview. It appears that QA mechanisms are already internalised within the old university and that the academics here, have already adapted to a quality culture. The domestication to the quality discourse constructs invisible practices (Bernstein, 1996) and a quality habitus (Bourdieu, 1996) internalised by the ethos and culture of the institution and expressed by the academics. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that their criticisms concentrate on the practical aspects of quality assurance.

Nevertheless, another explanation of the focus on the practical and operational processes of the QAA can be claimed to be the status of the institution. As a well established institution, the old university has already developed international co-operation with other universities, has an excellent research rating and already attracts international students. It already fulfils to a great extent the QAA requirements, and feels a different type of pressure when an audit is scheduled from what was experienced in the former polytechnic. In the old university the pressure is to stay among the elite institutions and not mere to survive.

### **The Former Polytechnic: England**

A different approach to internal quality is described by Billy Boyd who is responsible for quality assurance in one of the schools in the former polytechnic. This is an institution that a few years ago faced the threat of being closed down. Boyd, describing the process of institutional restructuring, explains:

I have a little bit to confess; about three years ago the university was racked by a series of students occupations...it was an indicator of the dying state of the institution...the leadership of the university had drifted...

This was the reason for the overall restructuring of the institution and its re-evaluation by the QAA. Part of the restructuring was designed to introduce and ensure mechanisms and procedures that would increase quality standards.

Now, one of the things that that [the restructuring] involved was to look at the wider quality assurance work. Whether this is true or not, up until the change, quality assurance was run from the centre and ...it was an extremely authoritarian regime and the quality people came in like the Gestapo or something...

So the view was taken that the schools... weren't on the quality agenda. It was not bred into the culture of the schools, it was something that was going on outside and over there.

...part of the cultural shift that myself and the vice chancellor wants to achieve...is to achieve an eterocentric university as a community that is working together

...the main division of quality into the schools was meant to be... starting to shift the culture of the place, the idea was that if you divide... in the schools the schools would own the process... and it will not be perceived as something that is outside, over there and imposed on us

In the former polytechnic the whole institution not only had to adapt to the bureaucratic mechanisms of the QAA, but also to develop a culture of internal evaluation and quality in order to reach the standards of HEIs. All members of staff and schools were given that responsibility, and quality shifted form a top-down procedure to cumulative awareness of individual academics, to schools, and the whole of the institution, a clear example of institutional adaptation to TQM.

The language used by Boyd to describe the way in which QAA is perceived within the former polytechnic is somewhat sinister. The reference to a Gestapo attitude and the need to conform to it show explicitly that QA procedures are not part of the institutional culture and every day life. Here the practices introduced by the quality discourse are explicit and visible. The control is external and authoritarian. The main challenge of the restructuring is to begin the internalisation of the quality discourse that will support the development of a quality culture and a quality habitus. How it is feasible to establishe this development within this institution is questionable and beyond the limits of this research. What is certain, though, is that Boyd, who is responsible for one's schools's quality assurance, and Cate Blanchett, who is the Vice-Chancellor of

the institution, both have expressed a similar perception of the quality discourse. They both see institutional restructuring as the path for innovation and survival within the global and regional HE trends.

In discussions with participants in the former polytechnic the issue of quality appeared in relation to every subject under investigation. The context of the following remarks was a discussion on the subject of the mobility of students utilising the Erasmus programme in the institution. Wood, who is responsible for students' mobility, describes the limitations that external quality may impose on mobility processes.

I've come up against overwhelming indifference from most of the staff, and it gets to most staff in terms of what's the kind of constant ongoing sense of crisis, which we all have, about equivalence and about inspection and standards and quality assurance; all these are pressures, mobile exchange for students is way at the bottom of anyone's interest or concern, and we also had - for the two or three years we - had to close eyes for the language teachers<sup>47</sup>.

In the above statement, two issues are highlighted: a) students' mobility, which is one of the most developed areas of the BP, has been neglected due to b) issues of quality, which embrace standards, inspections and equivalence are at the forefront of attention.

Concerning the realisation of the BP initiatives, interestingly, quality appears as the main obstruction to the mobility of Erasmus students and the mobility of academics, and that is considered to be the most developed area of initiatives in Europe within the EHEA framework. Clearly, mobility appeared through Wood's

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<sup>47</sup> Wood here refers to a separate set of issues, which the department had to resolve concerning the foreign languages lectures, and were prioritised in relation to the Erasmus system.

words as a lesser issue of concern when the quality of the institution was questioned.

The approach to external quality assurance in the former polytechnic is presented in the following quotation from Vigo Mortensen, who holds the position of Head of School in the institution. The extract although extended offers an interpretation of the external quality assurance process while the interviewee adapts to different positions, such as being the Head of School, and an academic and it conveys his personal understanding of the implications of the discourse.

As a head of department he first explained the process of and relation between external and internal evaluation procedures.

' We have currently coming up an institutional audit in fact it takes place next week and the institutional audit will determine whether the Higher Education Agency has, feel confident in full, or partial confident in the institution. So, it's a very important process for the university to ensure ...that the decision or the outcome of the audit is what is called a broad confidence in the institution. And in terms of the schools' quality assurance processes we have to comply with what takes place at university level and to we have to participate in such... this audit and academic reviews.

Then he explains the complications that such procedures create for the work of an academic.

All of this makes a very significant burden in terms of quality arrangements that we have to comply with in order to introduce the new programme, validate the programme, develop a new masters level modular programme, so, it is a really huge burden for particular members of staff, essentially those who run programmes, those who are course tutors



He moves on to present a personal view of the quality assurance processes and expresses his worries for his own institution but also for former polytechnics in general in the UK context.

So, quality assurance ... is really quite demanding as a process, my view is that quality assurance is typically more demanding in new universities than it is in old institutions and the regime will typically focus upon such things such as recruitment of students, apart from... the work doing the research and teaching, In terms of the UK Higher Education sector it's the ex-polytechnics that experience much stronger the quality regime than any of the traditional institutions.

QA is seen as a 'demanding' process and as 'burden'. This refers to the bureaucratic mechanisms of quality mechanisms and procedures. The feeling is that the former polytechnic cannot escape a scrutinised QAA, and thus the academics feel mistrusted and overloaded with QA work.

It affects reputation I suppose, it means that, you do not have the step forward confidence as it were ..., in terms of your state of university, so, and the expression of limited confidence can damage your appeal in terms of students and in terms of recruitment. And secondly from, certainly, from this school's point of view, it's really important to demonstrate that we have excellence in academic work and research as well as delivering to, a, an agenda that involves access opportunities for students in [that area], who typically would not enter higher education, or get opportunities to enter. And it's reconciling those things, demonstrating that you can do that effectively. One, create general access to working class socially disadvantaged students, and on the other hand deliver high quality academic and research programmes. That's what we have to come to achieve in relation to the quality assurance assessment.

Academics' attempt to promote a quality culture, due to their consideration that the institution needs to operate within the national, regional and global contexts leaves the institution with no time or space for issues related to their original student population. Institutional auditing does not distinguish between classes, genders or ethnic groups. However, the ideological interest of the institution is to serve the disadvantaged groups in its locality. These groups, though, are not represented in the QA mechanism or in the institutional evaluation and are not taken into consideration. Moreover, there is a strong discussion concerning widening participation, but, as has been shown in the case of the former polytechnic this is simply for increasing access and not widening the spectrum of socially disadvantaged groups entering HE.

Finally, Mortensen, taking again the position of the Head of the School, concludes with a remark which leaves the choice of remaining and working at the institution to each individual academic.

I think, I am speaking here from this school's point of view, but I think it also applies to other people in the university, they [stay] based upon a kind of political commitment essentially, a social, cultural or political commitment, in our school. People would not stay here if they didn't really feel highly motivated to work with the students themselves...

The participants in the former polytechnic seem to draw upon the political discourse that constructs their academic subjectivity in relation to the role, ethos and culture of HE. This political discourse contradicts the QA discourse driven by neo-liberalism that promotes a commercialised notion of HE.

As expressed by Mortensen, the case of the former polytechnic in relation to external quality evaluation is complicated. The former polytechnic faced closure

not long ago that led as pointed out by Boyd to a restructuring of the institution. The restructuring due to forthcoming evaluation was towards a TQM model, and clearly the institutional position was to move towards a quality culture at all levels. However, by promoting a more active engagement on the part of the academics the restructuring also placed more responsibilities within the academic community. These were viewed as a 'burden'. This 'burden' is considerable, as the former polytechnic's status and past have undermined the overall confidence of the Higher Education Agency (HEA) in the institution.

Apart from the problems related to finance that the former polytechnic faces due to this lack of confidence, which include low public research funding and a low rating that leads to less academically privileged students, the main issue of concern, is related to the social role and ideological position of the institution. The former polytechnic, created in the 60's and based in an area which is characterised predominantly by a working class and ethnic minority population, focuses on educationally disadvantaged groups of people. The aim of the institution was to provide education for these and still the majority of its students are working class, single mothers and ethnic minorities, students which are generally registered part-time and with a completion rate below the average.

The former polytechnic, while trying to adapt to the global and regional HE discourses and specifically to the quality assurance presuppositions, faces the challenge of altering the purpose of its existence. Within a neo-liberal, market oriented approach in HE, the institution is left alone without any significant state help to support its social role. As was clearly stated by most of the interviewees working there and in Mortensen's words, it is their personal belief in the ideology of the institution that leads them to choose to remain and sustain the former polytechnic.

### **General Remarks on the English Context**

Quality assurance works as a regulatory device for the process of knowledge production, rather than as a check on the quality of the product itself. That is apparent in both the old university and the former polytechnic. Where the difference lies is in the level of autonomy that each one of them experiences. The old university as an old institution has an established status that offers the space for greater autonomy, in contrast to the former polytechnic's condition.

In the old university, the procedures for QA are treated as a bureaucratic burden. In the former polytechnic the realisation of the quality discourse has led to internal evaluation procedures and quality assurance agencies and committees, to institutional and departmental restructurings and to the repositioning of its participants view of their role in the institution, whereas in my understanding the old university, has already reached the level of quality as a culture within the institution's everyday life and finds the bureaucracy unnecessary and time consuming. Was bureaucracy not what neo-liberal ideology was aiming to avoid? QAA a totally independent agency funded by subscriptions by UK universities and colleges of higher education and through contracts with main UK HE funding bodies has not managed to withdraw the bureaucratic burden caused by the welfare state's provisions.

The former polytechnic prioritises cultural adaptation, as its staff have realised that external quality mechanisms are not effective. It offers a politicised approach when discussing institutional quality in relation to the old university; presumably due to the fact that the members of the older institution have to deal with quality issues at a survival level, as the QA discourse opposes the ideological features of its existence. Quality issues in the former polytechnic arose either in order to justify the institutions or participants' actions, or as issues that offer possibilities

and limitations. Furthermore, the former polytechnic is constantly searching for a way or a space in which it would be possible for the institution to sustain its social role and also adapt to national, regional and global HE trends, two goals that are poles apart.

In the old university, it is clear that QA and the QAA have never been conceptualised as a threat, as a danger to the institution at the level of the final report after its overall evaluation. As the participants have not been clearly threatened or disturbed by such procedures, they concentrate more on the bureaucratic, operational mode of quality evaluation.

Finally, it could be claimed that the old university has moved to a more advanced form of governance as it rests its ways of governance and management in a global and not on a local context whereas the former polytechnic's approach to governance is still much localised. This difference will be discussed further in the following section on institutional governance.

### **The Greek quality context**

At the state level, the quality assurance discourse emerges as a secondary discourse. Specifically, in the Greek context, the quality assurance discourse was, at the time when this research was conducted officially promoted through the then forthcoming law concerning the evaluation of the Greek HEIs. At this point I shall repeat the fact that at the time of the data collection Greece had not constructed an official national-state or private body for the official evaluation concerning the quality assurance of the Greek HEIs. Moreover, any attempt towards the establishment of any type of official evaluation was regarded with scepticism on the part of the academics and provoked considerable opposition.

Due to the above peculiarity that characterises the Greek context the discussion of the quality discourse in relation to the Greek HEIs will focus on the institutional level. At this level the quality discourse is unofficially promoted through the established institutional internal and external evaluation. The unofficial promotion of the quality assurance discourse through institutional evaluation is regarded as tertiary discourse, as it is embedded in and requires institutional changes.

### **The Old University (AEI); Greece**

In the AEI, evaluation procedures have been in place unofficially since 1998. They started as a pilot programme organised by the institution for it to evaluate itself as the means to adapt to the EHE trends. As the former dean, Jagger, suggests:

It was something that needed to happen, if you wanted to be an institution that would follow the changes in European higher education.

Evaluation as a process was not obligatory as it was an internal experiment focused on how the institution and its participants would react to its procedures. Thus, a very few departments did not participate in the process, and moreover did not accept to be evaluated. There were no interviews with people in those departments, but other interviewees described the attitude of non-participation as stemming from fear of the outcome or as a political position of opposition to EU initiatives in higher education.

The deputy dean, Spacey, who is also responsible for European issues in the institution, explained that:

98% of the departments of the institution are participating in the evaluation.

He described the process of the evaluation, according to which there is an internal and external evaluation. The internal procedures are organised by a body, created by the institution, in which the team, consisting of the dean, academics and main administrators, participate. This body sets the objectives, the means and the criteria for the evaluation. Interestingly, though, the deputy dean affirmed that:

Both the criteria of the AEI internal evaluation and the processes are in harmony with the criteria and process suggested by European evaluative bodies.

The closeness of the AEI's position on individual evaluation processes to that of the European QA agencies was also pointed out by Jagger. In the AEI, the quality QA discourse moves from the regional to the institutional level and gets realised, while at the national level the system is still in discussions.

A closer look at the way that the internal and external evaluation procedures were established in the AEI is offered by Penn. He is a member of the main administrative- managerial team of the institution. Before taking on the responsibility of organising the institutional evaluation, he had been appointed for the task of centrally organising the European mobility programmes for both students and academics. In his words

(I was appointed to a) new job, the job of evaluating the work of the teaching staff (academics within the institution). It was a new attempt to start recording the opinions of the students in relation to the academics concerning the modules, books, and educational material used.

This appointment described by Penn concerned procedures of internal evaluation. The main proposal was the development of a questionnaire that would be given to the students in order to evaluate the work of the academics. However, the institution moved to an external evaluation by requesting to be evaluated voluntarily by other academics.

After five years we moved the evaluation to the next level, the evaluation of the whole of the university by CRE (European Rectors Committee).

This first external evaluation moved the process of internal evaluation forward, in an attempt to require the institution and each department to keep records of its teaching material, condition of buildings, condition of laboratories etc.

We went forward, trying to develop a record that would create a file of each departments' features, ...features of evaluation,... in each department that would represent the condition of the department and any evaluator would be able to see what is the whole condition.

Finally, there was also a second attempt at external evaluation, again due to an institutional initiative, that was taking place while this research was conducted and concerned only six departments of the institution.

Six departments are evaluated by external examiners for internal to the institution purposes, it was our own initiative. No one asked us to do this. We got the evaluators from other Greek institutions, as these are more strict than foreigners as they come from competitive institutions. The University wanted to see certain things; it was not external from Europe. The departments' act in a competitive way, even though they are state institutions, they compete for funding



The last quotation concerning quality in the AEI comes from Anderson, an academic who is placed in one of the six departments under evaluation. At this point he was commenting on the attempt to organise the internal evaluation processes, and especially the questionnaire that was conducted for the students.

A good approach even though there were problems. Some of the questions were working against the validity of the procedure, they were not relevant questions... for example, one question asks students in the first term of their studies to comment on the examinations, even though those students haven't had the chance take part in one yet. However, the students do comment.

The point is to evaluate and develop yourself within the space and the limitations of the institution.

Official evaluation does not exist, and the external evaluation was a voluntary attempt.

One of the issues which is raised by these comments concerns the power relationship between students and academics, which creates a dubious situation when the former are called to evaluate the latter. Moreover, Anderson's perception of the quality discourse is related to the personal development of the academic and of the institutions and does not set it in a broader scheme of participating in a global competitive HE market.

The most striking aspect of QA in the AEI is the struggle of the institution to structure an evaluative system without any state support, even though it has no financial autonomy. These are considerable efforts, made because of the realisation that by the time the state will take on the responsibility of constructing an official quality assurance body it may be too late for the Greek institutions. In this university the advantage was that Jagger was also the president of the Greek University Rectors and the representative of Greece in the European Committee of University Rectors. Thus, even if he was not an active member of

the education policy elite acting on a regional level he was participating and engaging in the meetings. This primary engagement with regional discourse offered him the ability to lead the governance of the institution in a direction that will allow the space for its less problematic entrance to the regional market.

Finally, both Jagger and Spacey stated their worries concerning HEI quality. Their main concern was in relation to the upgrading of TEI to ATEI. They both made the same preliminary point, stated here in Spacey's words:

Old universities never had a problem with the upgrading of TEI to ATEI as such, and it was about time. We are the only country that had Highest (AEI) and Higher (TEI) education.

Nevertheless, most of the participants in the university were concerned with this issue. The oppositional point to the upgrading is that in the ATEI very few lecturers have a PhD, though in the old university you cannot claim such position without one. This and also the fact that TEIs did not include research as part of their institutional purpose, constructs in the AEI's participants' opinion a major quality issue. And with this I shall move to the Greek former polytechnic.

### **The New-University (ATEI); Greece**

In the ATEI, the situation in relation to evaluation is quite different from what was described in the AEI. As the Vice President of the institution, Kravitz, explained:

We've just started organising the overall institutional evaluation this year, after my constant persistence on the issue, although some departments have already run their own internal evaluation.

Kravitz offered a very positive view, suggesting that as long as the academics of the ATEI that do not already have a PhD get one and as long as the institution follows the EU and BP quality guidelines and standards, the institution will be on the same level as the Greek AEIs and other European HEIs.

ATEI could be seen as a good higher education institution. We try to adopt the European approach on education ,and we encourage our people to apply for PhDs and upgrade themselves. In a few years we will be at the same level, if we upgrade our people and try to work towards the European standards.

He promoted a very positive view of the changes in his institution which he saw as a European institution focused on the transition of labour qualifications. Kravitz had accepted unquestionably the quality discourse, as a leader that would innovate the ATEI. During the interview, he never stepped out his official position to offer a personal account.

The pertinent point though, in my understanding, is that although all the participants in Greek HEIs, AEIs and ATEIs, accept the quality gap between the two types of institutions, the government did go along<sup>48</sup> with the upgrading of the latter, claiming that was adapting to the BP policy discourse.

Concerning the so called 'upgrading' of the TEI to ATEI I shall introduce you Kein's account. He is one of the academics in the institution who earns most respect both from colleagues and students. He has taught there since 1974 and has neither a PhD nor an MA. He is not even an AEI graduate. He graduated in

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<sup>48</sup> There was great opposition among academics and students, participants in Greek AEIs and some participants in ATEIs, to the way that the upgrading of the latter took place.

the seventies from a further education institution called 'Small Polytechnic'. Nevertheless, he has an extended experience in the practical area of his field, which is electrical engineering.

I have no PhD, no MA. I was not allowed legally to study for MA in Greece. Right now I am undertaking an MA in Quality Assurance in the Open University.

I believe that at the present time an institution does not move forward, does not go up the scale or down the scale due to a law. I believe that an institution moves forwards due to other factors, meaning, whether an institution is established within the society in which it operates does not get realised through legislation. This law gave no further credit to the TEI. The social status of the institution is bound to the operation of the institution itself, and to the picture that it draws in its production and its connection to the labour market.

Kein explains the social role of the ATEI and the social reason for its existence, the vocational training which represents the way the ATEI serves its locality. The accreditation of the Highest title does not alter the position of the ATEI, as it does not alter the way the institution is perceived by the community in terms of status.

The 'Highest' (characterisation) sorts out the legal problem in relation to European institutions, that TEI was tertiary education but without an exact definition of what level. At least with the new legislation it becomes 'Highest', a division existing only in Greece – higher and highest - , and now the ATEI is also highest. And also, it followed the changes, alterations in other European countries such as the UK with ex-polytechnics and recently Germany and Italy.

What changes basically, is that now we have [in the name] an extra A...from TEI to ATEI.

The TEI was staffed in the wrong way. Its personnel were people coming from the labour force, practitioners, technicians, with a lot of experience in the market but not PhD's, without scientific skills, but I believe that in this type of institution we need both. ...How do I feel? It is a bit unfair, but we do not go back, we go forward and we had no alternative. Anyway the problem was that people got PhD years ago and did not get evaluated. What have they done scientifically since then?

Concerning Erasmus and mobility programmes, ECTS and the transfer of credits ATEIs offer an alternative approach. As Vicious, one of the few lecturers that hold a PhD, explains:

The reason we turned to develop the mobility programmes. The TEI needed to get out of its isolation and educationally and scientifically. That was the reason that led to changing the programmes of studies. The students got the chance to see different ways, studying in different departments, different cultures, different processes and procedures.

Erasmus is seen as a window to the outside world in the case of the ATEI, as it was a possibility for the ATEI academics to cooperate with other institutions and also provided a choice to ATEI students, not only for further academic progress but also for personal development. Discussing the particular case of a female student that left with an Erasmus programme in the final year and then continued for an MA in England, he explains his first approach to her:

I told her to go, and I said I do not care if you pass any modules, go for the experience. Yes, they get delayed but they gain in other areas. They gain experience, develop the language, learn a different culture, and I do not

care if they pass any modules. This is not the main concern, the main issues are the others not the modules

I managed to find this student, Pam, and she accepted to talk about her Erasmus experience.

There was one lecturer in the TEI that suggested to some of us that we should leave as Erasmus students. I spent a lot of time searching for the options I would have if I was going to go. I also spoke to people from the university that knew about the Bologna Process. It was a good opportunity, so I went, along with another girl...I do not regret it. If I had stayed I would have had to go to the UK anyway if I wanted an MA...for students like me, in the TEI, it is very good because we have no other options...

In 1999, Pam left the then TEI as an Erasmus student. She spent one year at a UK university, where she completed four modules and her dissertation. The UK institution awarded her a Bachelor's degree. With this degree she was able to get employed in the UK, do an MA and eventually return to Greece and find employment there. However, the ATEI has not recognised the credits from the UK modules or her working experience and thus, they asked her to do a six-month placement and take exams in order to be awarded the ATEI degree. Pam's experience is interesting on many levels of the BP and the Erasmus. I will only point out the obvious lack of credit transfer mechanisms and trust in relation to quality assurance between European HEIs. Pam doesn't really relate to the EHEA discourse even though she states that she is a product of it. She became aware of the possibilities that the BP offered by searching for the right information and then turned the process to her advantage.

This approach is also justified in relation to the type of students entering TEI and their options up to that point for continuing their education, as legally the TEI students could not apply for an MA in Greece. As Vicious commented:

The institution was trying to have continuity and responsibility towards the teaching, even though the teaching material and the laboratories were not up to date....I do not know how the official evaluation will work and it is very unclear. I know some general things, but I have not participated up to now to any procedures...Do we need evaluation? 100%.... TEI has no identity. It is tertiary education and the highest education. It is not only a matter of the quality of students, and the scientific knowledge but also the demands of the market. .... We need evaluation in here. And we also need students that they are willing to work, not A students, students that have the will. Now that more students enter higher education the TEI is in a bad condition. We used to get in this department students with 12 or 13 (out of 20). Now we get 10 and 9. it is obvious that these students are weaker and you have to adjust the teaching.

Other interviewees offered different accounts of the quality of the institution. Summing up, there are two main points a) some departments in the ATEI had already started both internal and external evaluation procedures, independently of the institution, by asking fellow institutions to evaluate them, and b) the institution, at the time when the interviews were conducted, was starting to organise a scheme to establish an internal evaluation mechanism, following the BP standards. Again the overall quality of the institution could be challenged, as the interviewees explained. The problem rests with the governmental arrangements for widening access and widening participation in HEIs, the call upon the institution to alter its role within the community from vocational training to a research and also to do that within a time limit of three to four years.

The concern is that the ATEI was already accepting students that did not do well in the national HE entrance examinations, and to a great extent, these were academically weak students. The Pan-Hellenic national examinations that school graduates have to take in order to gain a place at Greek HEIs classify students according to the grade they will get and then allocate them to ranked departments around the country. Obviously, the high grades are assigned to high ranked departments. These are generally found within the 'old' universities, with a few exceptions in 'new' ones<sup>49</sup>. With the rise of places in the old institutions the grade classification for entering ATEI's is even lower. In their understating, the participants in the ATEI said, this would be a major issue to tackle in terms of the quality of teaching, as they will probably need to lower the standards for students to be able to graduate, and for the ATEI to stay within the completion standards of HEIs. Moreover, if the completion standard of a HEI is low that also affects its overall quality evaluation. Finally, the ATEI appears to be trapped within a vicious circle constructed by the quality policy discourse.

### **General remarks on the Greek context**

To sum up the previous discussions, Greece has not yet officially instituted evaluation procedures at a state level in HEI. Although there is no official quality assurance body, the institutions operate their own internal evaluations and participate in European evaluative audits working on the quality assurance issues.

In the AEI, Jagger, due to his position as a former Dean and as the president of the Greek rectors participating in European policy elite meetings, has access to the EHEA discourse at all levels and appreciates it. Nonetheless, on a personal level he detaches himself from the discourse. His decisions have been driven by

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<sup>49</sup> These are mainly departments that do not appear as part of an 'old' university and are mostly vocational, e.g. the Department of Tourism Business Management



his positional responsibilities as Dean, but his personal view sees the process as an 'unavoidable' necessity. Spacey's position is rather estranged from the official discourse. He is critical on the personal level, and his overall attitude is to work in the best way towards the ends of the BP. At this point it can be said that even though Jagger and Spacey resist, on different levels, the principles and values of the main discourse (EHEA) as such, their criticisms do not lead to its rejection, nor are these criticisms always translated into actions. It can be claimed that an oppositional space, a space for change, is created.

The ATEI, on the other hand is in a worst condition than the AEI. The institution apart from the establishment of quality assurance has also a substantial amount of issues to consider due to the upgrading to an ATEI. Nevertheless, the institution is making an effort to follow the regional demands even though state support, operational, organisational, structural and financial is minimal.

Moreover, and in realistic terms, in both institutions, the performance of quality is regarded as the 'ticket' for the regional HE market. Most of the participants, apart from those who held positions within the management of the institution, concentrate on the evaluation procedures that will lead to quality. However, there is considerable anxiety on the way that these procedures will be established as no one has any guidance towards their construction. It is apparent that the space that is created for agency when the discourse moves from the regional to the national context ends by becoming problematic as the regional initiatives explicitly request quality assurance and quality standards but do offer any specification of how these might be accomplished by the institutions. Finally, the lack of a central national initiative has left the institutions to tackle with the regional initiatives individually.

## **Section 2: Higher Education Institutions' Governance in the Bologna Process: England and Greece**

At this point I will present the main trends of change due to the adaptation of the BP by the HEIs which I researched, as they appeared according to the coding of the primary data. I shall first discuss the outcomes of the English institutions and then, separately those of the Greek ones. In the last part of this section I shall engage in an overall discussion of the four institutions concerning HEIs' modalities of governance developed within the EHEA framework. Schematically, the main features appear in Table 12 for England and Table 13 for Greece. I will describe the main features in each institution. I will try by placing 'quality' at the centre of my analysis to explore the governance under which these institutions operate, their differentiated modes and the reasons for this.

**Table 12: Features of institutional governance (England)**

<b>Old University; England</b>	<b>Former Polytechnic; England</b>
Research	Teaching and conditions of studying
Co-operation	Erasmus
Critical over quality culture	Restructuring –anxiety and pressure over quality
Overcome discourse due to status	Awareness of Bologna
Less knowledgeable of Bologna	Funding focusing on EU framework
Focusing on England Funding	

## **The Old University**

The most interesting point to emerge from the primary data on the old university was the lack of knowledge of the BP on the part of the academic and administrative staff interviewed. Even though the participants that were interviewed claimed to recognise the value of co-operation between HEIs, they did not place it clearly within a European context. They also viewed it as a one-way process of accepting students from other universities and not sending their own abroad as they appeared sceptical on the benefits that their students would derive from other institutions.

The old university is highly research-oriented, however, the funding for research, as was explained, is seldom oriented towards the European Framework. The explanation lies in the amount of money offered for research from the Framework, which is significantly less than what a state body would offer. For example, a state body would offer an additional amount of 90% of the main funding for the administrative expenses of the research, something that the Framework does not offer. Moreover, in the English context, access to public funding is controlled and related to each institution's QA rating, which means that the higher the rating the higher the funding and vice versa.

According to the participants' views of the QA mechanisms adopted internally and externally in the old university, it can be said that the institution enjoys the benefit of high levels of confidence about the quality of education that it offers. For this reason its predominant concern is to ensure the minimum of state intrusion into its autonomy. Concerning quality, the experience of the participants in this university seems to be one of frustration in practical terms as they described the Quality Assurance Association (QAA) assessment as more of a bureaucratic burden than anything else

This confidence could possibly be the reason for the lack of reference to the BP policy discourse. The old university is already part of the global HE market. Bologna is seen again as a bureaucratic process concerning the establishment of new mechanisms for ECTS and standards, and is regarded mainly with scepticism. The position of the institution is to negotiate the ends of the process within the policy discourse.

As Ian McKellen, the former Dean of the old university noted – he had retired six months before the interview –

At the old university we..., I think it is best to say, that we kept a watching roof on the BP. We weren't strong advocates we weren't strong resistance and we wanted to know what was going on but not just to make any changes... What I think is important to ask is in the ... and in the context of aiming for the European Education Area concept. Where, this would be an elaboration going on further than the free transfer of labour in the European Community, which entails the recognition, mutual recognition of qualifications.

Really I suppose what was most interesting, was the concept of harmonisation of qualifications and qualification equivalences.

One of the issues of course concerned us was the possibility that this might be a tool by government to impose more control over the university... because as you know... the actual political and ministerial structures in higher education vary in different countries in Europe in fact quite considerably

The old university is an institution with an internationally recognised status. The focus of the institution for its evolution is already placed on international co-operation, on attracting students from a world-wide context and quality culture is part of its value system. The old university then appears sceptical of the BP. This scepticism lies in the preservation of the modality of governance that the institution has developed through the years of its existence, and also on the state of scrutiny that has sustained the excellence of the institution. Moreover, in the old university the participants are not convinced for the benefits that their institution may gain from the implementation of the process, and they have significant worries that the BP is a governmental technique to gain control over HEIs. It is likely that this concern is based on the fact that the old university is already competing successfully in a global HE context, and that the BP, working at regional level, is perceived as a constraining mechanism.

### **The Former Polytechnic**

In the former polytechnic, accepting the BP policy discourse appears as a 'must do' condition for the Academic Board of the institution, but it is questionable how far this process has gone in terms of the realisation of the Bologna institutional goals. Two issues are highlighted in the interviews: a) student mobility, even though there are attempts in this direction, has been overlooked, because, b) issues of quality, which embrace standards, inspections and equivalence, are at the forefront of attention. That is the case mainly due to the status of the institution, as the Higher Education Agency (HEA) does not have confidence in the former polytechnic.

This particular institution faced the threat of being shut down a few years ago due to a quality failure that led to an internal restructuring. When discussing the restructuring, the participants explained that the whole institution had to not only adapt to the bureaucratic mechanisms of the QAA, but also to develop a culture of internal evaluation and quality in order to reach the standards expected of

HEIs. All members of staff and schools were given the responsibility for this, and the assessment of quality shifted from a top-down procedure to a cumulative awareness among individual academics, to schools, and to the whole of the institution.

In general, the former polytechnic prioritises the teaching and learning conditions of its students and most of the participants were aware of the existence of the BP policy discourse. Research is also a central issue, though funding is difficult to obtain as the institution lacks the high quality rating necessary for state funding. Possibly that is the reason the institution is more inclined towards the European Framework for funding by another competitive funding body, and to co-operation with other European institutions.

Cate Blanchett, the Vice Chancellor of the former polytechnic, explains

At the Ex-Polytechnic we have discussed the BP very regularly, in academic board which is the equivalent of senate, the same body in other institutions.

We discussed the BP probably around six times, four-five times, a year, which is very frequent. Every time there is a publication, every time there is a report related to the BP we discuss it at the academic board, and that means that the senior academics of our university and the members of the board are very aware of the developments in relation to Bologna.

This is quite unusual; in many UK universities ... most people haven't heard of the Bologna at all.

Blanchett was eager to make the point that the former polytechnic in spite of its status as an former polytechnic and the problems that it faced few years earlier with the QA, is well advanced at this point in relation to regional HE policies. However, the engagement with the BP can be regarded as a safeguarding

modality of governance for the former polytechnic. In the previous section concerning the quality discourse in the former polytechnic, it became apparent that the main challenge for the institution is to accomplish both research excellence at a regional and moreover at an international level while preserving its social role at a local level by offering access to HE to disadvantaged groups. The EHEA and the ERA offer a space to the former polytechnic not only for regional co-operation but also, and most importantly, as a body from which the institution can extract funding for research. Within this spectrum it is not surprising that the former polytechnic is shifting, even partially, to a more regional modality of governance aiming to attract financial support.

However, Wood, an internationally recognised academic who has spent more than thirty years in the ATEI, stresses the point of the institutional ideological position

Throughout the 1990s the institution has been struggling to reconcile its additional ideological position... through all the pressures of market processes and the development of the university.

What becomes clear is that the former polytechnic's transition to a new modality of governance, from locally focused to regionally oriented for the preservation of its local role, poses a different challenge concerning the ideological position of the institution and its participants. As noted in the previous section on quality the former polytechnic's participants remain at the university primarily due to the ideological position that it expresses. They remain because through that institution they fulfil their personal, academic and social aptitudes in relation to their social context. Any alteration of the ideological position of the institution might therefore possibly cause struggles at the various levels of institutional management and governance.

I shall move at this point to the discussion concerning the HEIs in the Greek context. Table 13 offers a schematic view of the main features which appeared in each institution.

**Table 13: Features of institutional governance (Greece)**

<b>Old University; Greece</b>	<b>Former Polytechnic; Greece</b>
Research and teaching	Teaching and conditions of studying
Co-operation (Erasmus)	Erasmus
Internal quality mechanisms before national law	Restructuring -anxiety and pressure over quality
Overcoming' discourse due to inefficient management	Awareness of Bologna
Great awareness of Bologna	Lack of research
Focusing on EU Funding	Greater access – weaker students
Greater need of EU connection	

### **The AEI**

In the AEI the BP was common knowledge. All the interviewees, though to different extents, were aware of the main aims of the process, and also of the implications that the policy discourse has for their institution. This awareness is also obvious from the institutionally introduced initiative to develop an internal evaluation system and also to request to be evaluated by an external body.

The Institution is proud of its very developed Erasmus programme for its students, which is structured centrally. This was a subsequent development as prior to the Bologna Declaration student mobility organisation was at the faculty level. Moreover, the institution has also introduced an additional funding to that of



the European Framework for mobility students, for extra financial support to its student that participate in Erasmus.

The AEI is an institution that focuses on both research and teaching. However, state funding for research in Greece is a problem, and it is minimal for the AEI which in its attempts to catch up with EU and BP's directives and initiatives, does its best to be research driven and research-oriented, but the only source of big scale funding is the European Framework. The participants show great awareness of the BP, and have a critical view of it. They recognise its necessity for the survival of the university in a competitive regional and global higher education environment, but their main concern over their attempts to compete is the traditional bureaucratic character of Greek institutions and their malfunctioning management that leads to inefficiency.

Jagger, who was the Dean of the AEI until two weeks before the interviews were conducted, was rather displeased with the overall idea that HEIs should follow specific criteria and procedures adopted from a European educational context developed on the basis of global economic competition. Specifically, most of the interviewees saw the BP policy discourse as a non-alternative condition, expressed their dislike of the direction that EHEI's are taking due to the process.

[The] Bologna [process] is an unavoidable and irreversible situation. As the Dean of this institution I had to work towards its full engagement in the BP. If we hadn't made decisions according to the Bologna outlines, this institution would eventually be excluded from the European educational market. On a personal basis, though, I can't really say that I am happy with the condition in which HEIs are engaged right now. The idea and the purposes of a university are changing and not towards a direction that I like.

Discussing the changes in Greek universities due to the regional initiatives, the interviewees often moved into a comparison with the universities in England as they were expressing their fears for Greek and European institutions, especially in relation to institutional ranking. That is something that they would prefer to avoid as this condition only creates more problems for average institutions by cutting down their funding from the government, supports the already advantaged institutions.

Spacey, the Vice-Chancellor of the AEI and responsible for European affairs in the institution was one of the main supporters of the BP policy discourse and the construction of the internal quality mechanisms. However, at a personal level he appeared to adopt a less enthusiastic point of view, stressing that

the idea of institutional ranking, the way it happens in the UK, is something that I would prefer to be avoided in both the Greek and European contexts. This situation only creates more problems for average institutions by cutting down their funding from the government and supports the already well-off institutions. It is just something that I wouldn't like to see happening.

The AEI is considered a very good institution in the Greek context. However, its status and quality have not been challenged at a regional level. The state's lack of provision for regional trends in HE, such as the establishment of a national QA system according to European standards, has pushed the AEI towards a peculiar modality of governance. The institution, even though it operates in a very state-centred educational environment, seems to have overlooked the state and moved to a straightforward interaction with the regional discourse without the intermediate level of discursive recontextualisation, that of the national level.

Nevertheless, this move, as shown through the data quoted here, was a matter of survival for the AEI, as this institution is relevantly a new player in the regional and global HE market.

### **The ATEI**

The ATEI has many obstacles to overcome in order to fully adapt to the BP policy discourse. This type of institution had no legal support for research as it was structured to serve the strictly vocational training needs of its students and of the market. For this reason, the main priority of the institution was the quality of the teaching and of the conditions of study. Moreover, when the ATEI was defined as TEI – ATEI after the upgrading of the institution – its graduates were not legally permitted to apply for MA places at the Greek AEIs. Consequently, most interviewees from the former polytechnic were concerned with the status of the degrees and the opportunities of the students to take MAs after the upgrading of the institution. The only option for the former ATEI students to continue their studies was to go abroad and enrol in other European HEIs. For this, the Erasmus programme was one of the main routes, which, as a result, has left the institution with a very well organised Erasmus and ECTS scheme.

Quality in the ATEI is another important issue in relation to its modality of governance. Kravitz, the Vice Chancellor of the institution, offered a very positive view of the development of the institution.

In a few years we will be at the same level, if we upgrade our people and try to work towards the European standards.

However, is questionable the level of quality which the institution can reach at the regional level.

### **General Remarks on Higher Educations' Governance; England and Greece**

It was only after first describing the main features of each one of the four institutions under research that I would be able to move on to a discussion concerning the modalities of governance that the institutions present in relation to the BP policy discourse and to regional and global HE policy trends. As discussed in the section on HEIs governance in the previous theoretical chapter, my concern does not lie with the institutional governance in relation to its internal structural management, but it is rather more focused on the individualisation and totalisation governance processes within the context of neo-liberal governmentality in HE.

Drawing attention to some general conclusions related to the position of all the institutions quality assurance seems to work more as a regulatory device for the process of knowledge production rather than as verification of the quality of the product itself. Where the difference lies is in the level of autonomy that each one of them possesses and within which it operates.

From a state-focused point of view, the old university, in the English context, has an established status that allows the space for greater autonomy in contrast to the former polytechnic. In the old university, the assessment of quality is treated as a bureaucratic burden. In the former polytechnic the realisation of the quality discourse led to internal evaluation procedures and quality assurance agencies and committees, to institutional and departmental restructuring and to the repositioning of its participants' view of their role in the institution.

I am not claiming that 'old' institutions do not face any challenges in terms of QA, but that their participants go over and through the external evaluative procedures

with a security deriving from the status of the institution. Their anxiety then is focused on the preservation of this status. This is a difficult task within the BP policy discourse, as the global competition that EHEIs have been asked to participate in becomes increasingly a European competition for funding, for the attraction of students and for the gaining or sustaining of a certain status.

In relation to the European dimension, the former polytechnic in England appears to be more advanced than the old university. It is the lack of state funding and the search for partners for the development of quality that has driven the institution towards more European solutions. In the former polytechnic, the BP policy discourse offers a possibility for expansion, research and development, and if it is used to its full extent, such institutions have the potential to move up the ladder of institutional ratings, precisely due to their European orientation.

In relation to the Greek state, context the main concern focuses on whether the Greek HEIs will be able to adapt fully to the BP quality guidelines. The AEI is certainly in a more advanced position than the ATEI due to the status of AEI, but technical aspects of the quality discourse procedures are not yet in place nationally and institutionally.

The ATEI's case is very complicated. That is due to the way in which the upgrading concerning the status of the institution was realised. As already discussed in previous sections, the alteration did not entail any significant processes towards the introduction of the ATEI to the new status. The only provision taken was the offer of four years probation time, in which participants that did not hold a PhD in the upgraded institutions had to study for and gain one. In relation to quality issues, as also noted earlier, widening access and participation in HE policies created another problem. The massification of HEIs without the appropriate organisational structures even though constructed though

socially welfare-oriented discourses, finally operates as counter productive for the survival and quality of the institution.

What is noticeable, though, is the recontextualisation of the BP policy discourse from the regional to the national level. It appears that in the Greek national context the perception was that the BP policy discourse had been realised through the passing of a law for the establishment of the national quality agency, and another on the harmonisation of AElS and ATElS. Interestingly, though, the institutions had long before recognized the demands of the BP policy discourse and had moved independently towards their realisation. It can be claimed that the institutions operated within a straightforward interaction with the regional discourse, overcoming the state-national level, primarily due to its weakness.

The old university as an institution rests its governance and management on a global context, and not on a local one. As I discussed in previous sections regarding the relationship between the global HE discourse and that of the BP, the latter appears to gain its substance only in relation to global HE trends and competition. The old university, due to its status as an internationally well-established institution on the one hand and the peculiar position of England towards the EU on the other, has constructed and developed an operational mode of governance that lies within the context of global HE trends. In such an institution, the regional BP policy discourse is a re-enactment with restrictive features.

In contrast to the old university, the former polytechnic's governance is more locally oriented. The former polytechnic hosts many international students, and it is part of the global and regional competition. The local aspect of its governance, though, rests on the ideological and socially purposeful role that defines the institution. Its participants recognise the demands of global and regional

discourses. However, the governance of the institution is developed based on the attempt to balance the global-regional demands with the local service role of the institution.

Regarding the context of the Greek state, the AEI is making significant efforts to move from the national to the regional level through the Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programme, the attempt to adapt to the ECTS, research-based co-operation with other European HEIs and the establishment of internal evaluation procedures, but also through the initiative to request external evaluation of the institution. Nevertheless, these attempts derived from the HEI governing body and had no support from the national legal context. It can be claimed, that any attempt to overcome its local context is restricted due to the lack of organised state support for the HEIs.

Finally, the ATEI, the Greek former polytechnic, works at a national level. The governance of the institution focuses on the vocational training of its students and operates through a direct link with the market. This is obvious through the obligatory six months placements that the students need to undertake for the completion of their degree, which is structured in co-operation with local businesses. The ATEI makes a considerable effort to become part of the regional space of HEIs, however; up to the time when this research was conducted this was possible only through the development of programmes such as the Erasmus and the Leonardo Da Vinci, as the institution had no legal support for research.

Concluding this section, I shall offer some general comments on the four institutions in relation to each other. My attempt will not aim at a full comparison of the institutions, but it rather aim to illustrate and highlight the differentiated reactions that these four HEIs, which operate within differentiated localities and differ in their status, towards the same regional HE policy initiatives.

Within this perspective, it can be claimed that in England the old university, has moved to more advanced forms of governance than the other three institutions. It has a type of institutional governance that operates with a very business-like approach and it's characterised by 'fast' and 'aggressive' decision-making processes. In this operational mode of governance bureaucracy, and state control are regarded as negative interventions in the autonomy of the institution as a player in the global HE market. Moreover, this type of institution rests its governance and management more on a context than a regional global and definitely not on a local one.

The English former polytechnic and the AEI in Greece appear to have with a similar approach to governance in relation to the regional initiatives, even though they reach this end from different starting points and through different paths. Both institutions are generally well placed at a national and regional level; however neither is considered as a leading institution. The main priority controlling the logic of their governance is the expansion and growth of the institution while taking advantage of the European Bologna initiatives. Primarily, the attempt to do so concentrates around the European framework and the funding for research that the latter offers. These institutions have not yet reached the global level of HE competition. At the time when this research was conducted, their governance was focused on the establishment of a good situation for the institution within the regional level of HE competition.

Finally, the ATEI has a long way to go in order to reach even the level of regional competition. Thus the governance of this institution is bound to deal simultaneously with various aspects of institutional restructuring and evolution. However, what is striking with this type of institutions at a hypothetical level and what the ATEI's governance is resting upon, is the strong connection that the institution has established for years now with local and state businesses. Due to



this co-operation, which to a considerable extent is tied to the enforcement of those businesses by students from the ATEI, this institution already has bonds, networking and knowledge of the market. It is already vocationally oriented, and has established the processes needed in order to offer its graduates labour force skills. As a result, it is a prominent institution that will be able to attract private funding for research, as it has already established the trust with the businesses and from that point will be able to move forward in the direction of higher status institution.

The outcome of the above discussion is that the four institutions under research present differentiated approaches and offer various responses to the same regional HE policy discourse. What is clear, though, is that the sustainability, preservation and evolution of an institution in order to tackle global, regional or even national threats or difficulties in the form of policy initiatives depends on the autonomous governance of the institution. Explicitly, it depends on the space that each institution has to identify its individual strengths and weaknesses and either use them or work to minimise them accordingly.

The recognition of operational governance of HEIS discussed above raises two significant issues. The first concerns the role of HEIs and the second the relationship between EHEIs. Concerning the former, the increased diversion of institutional governance towards the positioning or repositioning of each institution within the global and regional HE education market becomes oppositional to the traditionally social role of HEIs. Depending on the type and status of the institution, each one seems to prioritise aspects that are mainly related to the financial maintenance of the institution. Finally, in most cases the issues of teaching and learning were of lesser importance primarily due to the insecurity that HEIs face at the present moment. It is as if universities need to justify and validate their existence.

The second issue specifically concerning the relationship between EHEIs is closely related to the first point. HEIs not only have different statuses especially with respect of they are perceived by students, parents, society and the market; they are also now clearly categorised according to the aspects of HE on which they tend to focus and prioritise through their institutional governance. In any case though, apart from the old university, which is already a globally established institution, the other institutions discussed in this research have accepted as their main funding resource the European Framework. Without any attempt towards an overall generalisation on the totality of European HEIs, the analytical attempt in this thesis raises a concern about the establishment of competition between EHEIs, as it appears that various institutions already compete for funding from specific resources, and will continue to do so.

## **Part D: Concluding Remarks**

In this final Part D of the thesis I shall present the outcomes and conclusions of this research. As previously stated, my work is primarily concerned with the deployment of discourse to generate an interpretive and reflexive account of the BP initiatives and the processes of their realisation in four different HEIs. It tells a 'story' of policy processes and policy discourses.

The conclusions will be structured around the different issues with which this thesis is engaged. Thus the discussion will address the utility of discourse as a methodological, theoretical and analytical tool and the general outcomes of this research at an empirical level and finally, conclusions of this research focusing on a global, regional, national and institutional context.

## **Chapter 7: General remarks and Conclusions**

In more detail the chapter will be divided in two sections. In the first section (Section 1) I shall present the outcomes of this research at policy and empirical level. These outcomes will draw from all three parts of the thesis; Part A: discourse as a methodological tool, Part B: discourse as a theoretical tool, and finally Part C: discourse as an analytical tool. In the second section (Section 2) will I will discuss the effects of the BP policy discourse realisation within the global, regional, national and institutional context.

## **Section 1: Policy and Empirical level**

My thesis has utilised discourse at the different levels of policy research, the methodological, the theoretical and the analytical, using the Bologna Process (BP) as an observed example. In this way I have sought to explore the possibilities and limitations of discourse as a methodological, theoretical and as an analytical tool applied on secondary and primary data. At this point I shall portray the benefits of utilising the notion of discourse as a constitutive element in the different parts of policy research.

### **At the Policy Level**

#### **Methodological**

At the policy level this research attempted to construct the BP as a policy discourse. At the time the research began the BP was in its first years of existence without a clear understanding of the processes that would later be established and which would facilitate the realisation of the initiatives. While the substance of the BP was and still is fluid, the core methodological problem was, whether a compilation of several initiatives under one declaration could be regarded, researched and discussed as a first attempt at constructing a linear HE policy at the regional context.

To that end, through the discursive analysis at the methodological level, an issue of significant importance was identified. That was the complexity of the BP as an 'education policy'. Its complexity derived from its constituent features a) the absence of a legal framework permitting non-obligatory and voluntary participation on behalf of the signatory countries, and b) the on going character of the BP. These two features are still not fully realised, at the time that this research is ending.

The notion of discourse did not offer a solution at the methodological level for the research of the BP but offered a modality for its investigation. That was possible through the utilisation of the 'policy cycle' as a methodological framework, a conceptual toolbox for the exploration of the different empirical and ideological aspects of which the BP as policy consists and also from a discourse-based approach to research and analysis at the level of research realisation.

The conceptualisation of the 'policy as discourse' offered the means to overcome both the non-legislative nature of the BP and its on-going nature. As the discourse defines and constructs the practices in which it appears, the lack of legislative characteristics does not limit the work of the discourse. And in the case of the BP, the lack of legislative characteristics is proven to be to the advantage of the discourse rather than challenging its substance.

The discourse-based approach to research and analysis which offered a framework based on an open-ended discursive appreciation of the research methodology with a reflexive character and an interpretive representation of the data, established the representation of the on-going nature of the research. Hence, as already mentioned in previous sections, this research can only be described as a 'snapshot' in relation to the time limitations of the BP policy discourse, and as non - 'representative' in relation to its spatial territory.

However, a discursive approach to research on policy is bound to have limitations. These were addressed through the theoretical appreciation of methodological concerns about discourse. My primary concern while using a discursive approach has always been the space that the discourse allows for agency. It is the fear of deterministic positions and fragmented conditions that will place HEIs and their participants without an alternative to the practices of the discourse. Theoretically, the problem of agency was addressed through the distinction between 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse' and also the empowerment of the agents through the construction of their subjectivities by

other discourses. Nevertheless, the problem that still remains is the identification, of traces, if any, that leave the space within HEIs for collective action and collective opposition to the BP policy discourse.

I have adopted a rather unorthodox approach to the research process which arises from the centrality of and prioritisation of discourse. This is based on the genuine belief that the understanding of the BP's discursive processes will offer a space for the manipulation of the discourse, especially at the level of the construction of policy problems or for manoeuvring around the discourse as the means to alter its focus. Conversely, I should acknowledge that the other side of the same coin is that if this research reaches the point of showing or opening that space, that would be open for everyone and the evolution of a fluid discourse, concerning the BP, will move towards its sustainable continuity, possibly to the limitation of that space. The most likely way for this to happen is by altering the meanings of the notions used in the discourse, e.g. the social character of HE within the BP discourse would be preserved through arguments which prioritise widening access to or mass participation in forms of higher education, through the establishment of quality in HEIs for the benefit of the institutions, the students and the society. By changing the discursive context in which these notions appear, their meaning alters and the discourse constructs different classifications and typologies of students and HEIs. But for a further, I hope more insightful, exploration of these issues I shall move to the following Part B in order to look at the BP policy discourse theoretically.

## **Theoretical**

The use of discourse as a theoretical tool at the policy level demonstrated the work of the BP as a policy discourse in different contexts by highlighting its interconnection with other discourses such that of globalisation, knowledge economy and quality assurance. The theoretical discussion suggested that these discourses are sometimes imbricated, interlocking, parallel and dependent on

each other and other times they contradict and crash. In all cases, the context within which these discourses are identified and researched is of significant importance for their exploration, description and understanding.

My starting point for the above exploration was to highlight the 'demand/response' character of the relationship between globalisation and the BP discourse and their conceptual interconnection. Hence, I adopted Lingard's and Rizvi's (1998) dual understanding of globalisation as both a 'process' and an 'ideological discourse', and adapted this appreciation while discussing the BP policy discourse. In this way I was able to trace points of convergence and divergence between the policy processes utilised for the realisation of the discourses in HE and the ideological underpinnings of these discourses. The simultaneous discussion of the two discourses within this perspective provided a theorised description of their relationship.

Briefly, my analysis suggests that the discourses of globalisation and that of the BP converge significantly. The ideological features of the globalisation discourse have been embodied in that of Bologna, as an education policy response to the global context. It could be claimed, on the one hand, that in this recontextualisation, from the global to the national level, the discourse's main features, such as, competitiveness, flexibility and quality, remain unchanged. On the other hand, the continuous reference to social and cultural issues in the BP discourse suggests that the adoption of the globalisation discourse is an informative process of the discourse, while the latter changes levels. Moreover, the two discourses are neither similar nor parallel to each other. Rather the BP policy discourse only makes sense, only has a need to exist in the terms, demands and patterns set by the globalisation discourse. Finally, they stand with ideologically parallel features, but these appear with different strength and force in their structure as discourses.

## **Analytical**

The discourse-based model, introduced in the analytical section, for the analysis of the primary data, offers a 'bottom-up' appreciation of the changes within the HEIs under research and their interaction with the BP policy discourse on every level; regional, national, institutional. This appreciation derived from the interviewees' individual perceptions of the BP policy discourse, and aims to highlight the position of both the HEIs and their participants within the constant recontextualisation of the policy discourse. The analytical model also allowed the direct connection of the regional discourse to that of the global HE policy trends through links to and within the secondary data.

Most importantly, the model allows, on the one hand, the combination of individual institutional characteristics with those of the specific BP policy discourse at the different levels of its recontextualisation. On the other, it moves to identify totalisation processes through the recognition of common features within the four HEIs. Finally, the model has offered the space for interactions to appear that were not identified at first. These were the interactions between the institutional level and the regional level without the mediation of the national/state level.

## **At the Empirical Level**

### **Methodological**

Treating the BP as discourse at the methodological level empirically offered an understanding of the issues related to it. The most important inputs of such treatment in this research were the acknowledgment of the actors participating in the BP and the identification of the networks and the processes which are



articulated before the publication of an official text, which can be found in detail in Chapter 2.

It has also been valuable to understand the language that is adopted for educational issues within the EU framework. As has been extensively noted by Peterson and Bomberg (1999), the language used, not only in the official EU documents but also during the networking and negotiating processes, is very technical linguistically and subject-focused. This can be traced both in relation to the consultative networks operating within an EU framework and in the official EU bodies. For example, the Commission is sub-divided into highly specialised committees, one of them concerning higher education, so any voice has to be part of the discourse, even linguistically.

Dealing with the BP official documents the definition of terms is fluid. Linguistic ambiguity produces opposition, struggles, fragmentation and numerous clarifying documents. That was the case for the notion of 'homogenisation', which was eventually replaced by that of 'convergence', and for the shift of the naming of the BP as a 'Common European Space in Higher Education' to 'European Higher Education Area'.

Moreover, in Chapter 2 it became clear that the linguistic modification of the various concepts and notions within the official documents may be, and in this research is being, perceived as an indicator of conflicting interests between the various actors within the BP. Several of these interests were addressed in an attempt to identify and understand key politics concerned with the BP policy discourse formation. However, my mapping of interest in this research it is not, exhaustive at all levels nor does it encompass all participating actors. That is one of the main difficulties within a discourse approach. It opens a very wide space in the analysis of the policy discourse that needs to be thought out methodologically, so that the researcher will be able to set limitations and specify the research interest.

## Theoretical

Theoretically my aim was to show how the notion of discourse offers the possibility of tracing and justifying current changes in and policies for higher education. I used as an example the BP policy discourse and the attempt to construct the EHEA. My primary concern while using a discursive approach as an attempt to overcome the fear of adopting a normative position within a discourse-based approach has always been the space that the discourse allows for agency, or the agency within the discourse.

Discourse is taken to be as a descriptive modality at the level of recontextualisation of notions, ideas, perspectives and perceptions at the political, cultural and economic level, in which the subjectivity of the agent is both a product of discourse and a force of its recontextualisation. The BP is treated as EU/European higher education policy-discourse that both embodies and is constructed by counter discourses. Finally, I positioned this research in a discursive context by stating which discourses I prioritise and why, so as to justify the focus of the analysis.

Quality in this research was treated both as a prerequisite for and a consequence of the effective realisation of the BP policy targets. Within the discourse of quality, as the means towards cultural change, there is the introduction of new values and ethics that define the way in which HEIs and their participants operate. Moreover, quality and the features related to it construct a new generic policy ensemble based on the ideas of neo-liberalism. In this new policy regime the constructive discourse is that of self-organisation, self-responsibility and autonomy – applied both to HEIs and their participants – and the policy's technologies for its sustainability are the reformation of the self in order to adapt to the new 'quality culture'. It is a regime that bases its governance not only on its acceptance by the largest part of the population - 45 signatory countries of the

BP – but also on excluding discursively the subjectivities that lie outside the policy discourse.

The discursive approach utilised in this research allowed a 'forward and backwards' treatment of both primary and secondary data at the theoretical and analytical level. By merging the different types of data in the two it was possible to reflect on regulatory mechanisms and policy technologies that could be identified in the context of the BP while introducing and exploring struggles within the discourse at various contexts.

### **Analytical**

The analysis looked at each HEI firstly at the individual level, then at the state level and finally at the regional level. The overall outcome can be summarised by emphasising that the four institutions present significant differences in the way they tackle both quality and governance. Moreover, they can be described as institutions that operate within differentiated speeds of adaptation and reform.

Individually, the four institutions present the following features:

In the old university the pressure is to stay among the elite institutions, and not merely to survive. Quality Issues and the QAA have never been conceptualised as a threat, as a danger to the institution. Thus, the primary concern of the institutional governance is based on the fact that the old university is already competing successfully in a global HE context and the BP, working at regional level, is perceived as a constraining mechanism.

In the former polytechnic the whole institution had not only to adapt to the bureaucratic mechanisms of the QAA, but had to develop a culture of internal evaluation and quality in order to reach the standards of HEIs. Moreover, the

former polytechnic, while trying to adapt to the global and regional HE discourses and specifically to the quality assurance presuppositions, faces the challenge of altering the purpose of its existence. Here, the main issue of concern is related to the social role and ideological position of the institution, but, due to the lack of state funding, the institutional governance it is not surprising that is shifting, even partially, to a more regional modality aiming to financial support.

In the AEI, evaluation as a process was not obligatory, as it was an internal experiment focused on how the institution and its participants would react to such procedures. However, the most striking aspect is the struggle of the institution to structure an evaluative system without any state support, even though it has no financial autonomy. As a result, to secure funding in the AEI the institutional governance is more inclined towards the European Framework, and to co-operation with other European institutions, in order to survive in and adapt to the regional HE market.

Finally, the ATEI appears to be trapped within a vicious circle constructed by its discourse on quality. The institution, apart from the introduction of quality procedures, has also issues to consider in relation to its upgrading to an ATEI. Nevertheless, the institution governance is primarily concerned with the possibility of the institution to follow the regional demands, even though state support, operational, organisational, structural and financial, is minimal. However, the focus is still at the national level.

### **General policy and empirical remarks**

I offer two insights regarding the realisation processes of the Bologna policy discourse: a) the combined but also distinctive characteristics of both individualisation and totalisation and b) the usage of regulatory mechanisms and policy techniques for the introduction of a 'quality culture' regime. In my attempt to describe the realisation of the Bologna policy based upon these insights, I

found it useful to deploy on both descriptive and explanatory levels the Foucauldian concept of 'governmentality'. Finally, when the third insight of the BP policy discourse, that of its European non-legislative nature, was introduced to the analysis I engaged theoretically with the notion of 'governance without government'. Both 'governmentality' and 'governance' were employed as diverse but also interrelated concepts, and each of them offers support to the analytical description.

Both governmentality and governance were evident within the BP's neo-liberal discursive context. The operational mode of neo-liberalism was discussed at a political, institutional and ethical/cultural level, in relation to 'the task of cultural reformation' (Dean, 1999, p.172). The discussion led to the questioning of the nature of 'choice' within a neo-liberal driven EHE discourse which is adapted to the BP policy discourse initiatives. The exploration of the space for choices available to the HEIs and their participants was addressed through a discussion of the processes leading to institutional and policy governance

I identified two types of institutional governance. The first type is locally targeted and state oriented; the second type moves from the local/national necessities to be globally targeted and regionally oriented. The two different types of institutional governance are linked to individualisation and totalisation features and processes of EHEIs within a type of governmentality set within the neo-liberal discursive context. The individualisation of a HEI is seen as locally oriented, when the institutions operate according to demands arising from national interests or local needs and aiming to preserve their local character, ethics and ideals while engaging in a global market. The totalisation of HEIs' governance is examined through the alternation of their focus on regional and globally influenced requirements, with the aim of surviving competitively.

Moving to the discussion of policy governance, I traced similarities between the BP's operational modes and what is taking place at the level of policy shaping

decision-making within the EU framework. This way of looking at the BP exposed the importance of an elite policy circle, which operates through elite policy networks and negotiates private and public, local/national and regional interests within the EHEA discourse. This discussion suggested serious concerns related to the democratic deficit, popular participation and the representation of interests at the regional level of HE policy formation.

I concluded that the BP, as a modality of policy governance without government driven by neo-liberal governmentality, in order to overcome the problematic of the representation of interests and popular democratic participation is bound to two alternatives. The first would be the prioritisation of nation-state policy peculiarities within the process, in an attempt to position the nation-states as regulators of the negotiation of interests within the process of discursive recontextualisation , aiming for a more balanced representation of interests. The second option would be for the BP to turn into a more official, institutionalised operational modality. The construction of a strong official institution, with legislative powers, would allow not only a more democratic operation within the European and EU context but also perhaps more chance of establishing a EHE.

## **Section 2: Context related outcomes**

At this point I shall present the outcomes of this thesis related to the spatial context in which the BP is located and examined.

### **On a global context**

An interpretation and exploration of the global context of HE was not initially part of this research. However, the discourse analysis suggested that it was only through identifying the current HE trends through the work of neo-liberal globalisation that an understanding of the need for and application of the BP would be accomplished. As it has already been discussed in the theoretical outcomes of this thesis the BP is neither similar nor parallel to the discourse of globalisation in relation to which the latter influences HE. Rather the BP policy discourse only makes sense, only has a need to exist in the terms, demands and patterns set by the globalisation discourse. These demands and patterns are highlighted in the 'demands' for competitiveness in HE and its patterns are obvious through the discursive notion of the KE. The BP and the globalisation discourse stand with ideologically parallel features, but these appear with different strength and force in their structure as discourses. Nevertheless, the influences are coherent and apparent in the works of multinational organisations and the political ideology they disseminate in the regional and national contexts.

Coming at the end of this research however, the global context of the BP attains a differentiated meaning. It is not only the globalisation discourse that affects the BP discourse but also the reverse. The gradual acceptance of the BP as a HE process by other regions has extended the significance of the process. Even though I will not go into detail at this point as it is beyond the aims of this thesis, still I should note that the most distinct spectators of the BP from its beginning has been that Latin American countries. Thus, at the present moment discussions have been completed and the European Commission is funding the

Latin American Tuning project, which follows the European Tuning programme. Moreover, the Erasmus programme has established a new structure with a global outlook called the Erasmus Mundus. That said, it could be argued that the BP within the ten years of its existence has not simply responded to global trends and influences but has played a part in reorienting these trends and influencing other regions to follow the European regional HE pattern.

### **On a regional context**

At the regional level the BP policy discourse is established as a response to global HE policy trends. It is a European framework of policy initiatives attempting to introduce EHEIs into the global HE market. For this to be accomplished, the regional geographical space is unified by the discourses of European citizenship and the construction of the non-European other. In previous sections, I demonstrated the complexities of the establishment of a common European reaction to the global HE competition. Various actors were identified playing a part in the process. The most significant of them are firstly, the ERT as the voice of the European industries calling for policies and forms of learning compatible with their demands for a European workforce. Secondly, there is the European Commission, which for years was aiming to include education as part of European economic co-operation as a response to both the demands of the ERT and the politics of neo-liberalism. Thirdly and most importantly are the four ministers who signed the Sorbonne Declaration and called upon the other European countries to work towards the structure of an EHEA. Finally, the Bologna Declaration was signed by 29 education ministers, defined as a European initiative and established within a European and not only EU co-operation.

The BP policy discourse has produced a vast amount of official documentation at both regional and national levels. From the first attempt to produce of a common official document introducing the aims of the BP, the Bologna Declaration, the



participating countries organised the Follow-up to the ministerial meetings group that is responsible for official publications. In the first instance the Follow-up group was a supportive body for the organisation of the meetings and the circulation of information within and between the participating countries. With the passing of time the Follow-up group was enlarged and is considered not only the official expression of the process but also the main instrument towards its institutionalisation.

At the European level, the BP policy discourse is realised and gains substance and official character through the procedures, meetings and discussions of the policy elite, and their negotiations on the guidelines that frame the construction of the EHEA. In other words, the BP policy discourse has constructed a regional policy regime that introduces new technologies and mechanisms within the governance of EHEIs.

As a concluding outcome from the discussion above and that of the previous section, I will argue that the BP, at the time that this research was undertaken, appears to be a process that lacks direct democratic control over and participation in the actual processes of governance (Santos, 1995). Moreover, the form of HE policy governance that has been established through the BP is articulated through regimes of power, policy and culture. Where regimes are identified as organised institutionalised practices, "if the latter term means the routinised and ritualised way we do these things in certain places and at certain times" (Dean, 1999, p. 21). The defining feature of European regimes is that they are "social institutions around which expectations converge around issue-areas" (Christiansen, T., Jørgensen, K.E., Wiener, 2001, p.6). Rosenau (1992) describes the way in which regimes operate towards the establishment of governance as follows:

...governance in global order is not confined to a single sphere of endeavour. It refers to the arrangements that prevail in the lacunae between regimes and,

perhaps more importantly, to the principles, norms, rules, and procedures that come into play when two or more regimes overlap, conflict, or otherwise require arrangements that facilitate accommodation among the competing interests (p. 9).

Finally, the BP, as a modality of policy governance without government, driven by neo-liberal governmentality, is bound to two alternatives which could overcome the problems of interest representation and popular democratic participation. The first would be the prioritisation of nation-state policy peculiarities within the process. At present, the EHE policy discourse, even though modified from the global level to the regional and finally to the national and local levels, still remains a top-down discourse. It is within the process of recontextualisation that nation-states engage in a more official form as regulators of the negotiations of interests. In that way, as Santos notes a balanced representation of interests might be achieved

if so, the preservation of the nation-states as key actors in the process of integration may provide, ironically enough, a safety valve against the consequences of greatly unbalanced representations of interests at the community level (Santos, 1995, p. 287).

The second option would be for the BP to develop a more official institutionalisation. And this is precisely the direction that the BP is moving in order to sustain the possibility for the creation of the EHEA. The construction of official institutionalised procedures, within legislative regulations, allows not only space for a more democratic operation within the European and EU context but also a better chance of achieving the EHEA aims. Otherwise, as Cafruny (1997) explains, EHEA will be part of

A neo-liberal Europe of the future is, however, likely to be poorer and less competitive. Lacking strong federalist institutions and social solidarity, it will be unable to exert much influence over U.S. policy and international capital

markets. European institutions will remain weak and poorly legitimised, paralysed by a dangerous and mutually reinforcing combination of market rationality and resurgent nationalism (p.124).

### **On a national context**

The BP policy discourse is found on a national level after its first recontextualisation. This is evident in the very different responses in the institutions in the two countries under research. In England, even though it is one of the main actors of influence as part of the Sorbonne team, the BP policy discourse is regarded in a sceptical way. This scepticism is also based on the peculiar relationship of England with Europe and the EU. Moreover, the argument for the creation of a more positive approach on the part of the English HEIs to the BP is based on the idea that England is already ahead in most of the aims and targets of the regional discourse but needs to keep its leading position.

In the Greek context, the situation is almost the opposite. Greece is not considered to be one of the leading European countries within the EU or in the European regional space. Moreover, the EU framework has been for the last 15 years the main source of research funding in the Greek universities. For this reason, the BP discourse was introduced in the Greek context as expressing the European ideal that the national HEIs need to reach. In Greece, the case for seeing the regional discourse as informing the national discourse is clear and has led to continuous attempts at and discussion for HE reformation.

At the national level, the production of policy texts has two points of reference i) regional and ii) national. The documents with regional reference are the national reports that each signatory country to the BP produces in relation to the level of its realisation. The policy documents with national reference are those which are created within the spectrum of national education policy and work towards the realisation of the regional initiatives. The common parameter in both types of

documentation is the influence of an education policy elite that acts at a regional level with reference to the national levels.

At the national level, the regional policy regime is enacted through national policies, guidelines and the pressure to embed the state/national focused institutions in the European context. However, this research makes clear, that even in the English institutions that have already established a place in the global HE market this pressure is problematic, as it appears as restricting institutional autonomy. By contrast the Greek HEIs welcome this possibility, as it opens a new space of opportunities, financial and educational, for them. Nevertheless, they still have a long way to go and without significantly support from the state.

### **On an institutional context**

The four institutions appear to have different speeds of adaptation to the regional discourse. This is primarily due to the status of the institutions. The most striking outcome is the differentiated modalities that were identified concerning institutional governance, in relation to the focus of the institution, which might be global, regional or national, all of these or only some of them. My analysis of types of governance is more concerned to identify the features of individualisation within each institution, which construct the reaction of the institution to the regional and national policy discourse, and less with the features of totalisation, which are concentrated on the realisation of common regional education policy initiatives. In addition, I consider the types of institutional governance as of major importance; they determine the possibility of a successful EHEA. The way that various institutions react to the same policy initiatives will highlight the way in which the interaction of the institutional level to the regional level is established. Moreover, institutional governance is the space that allows the creation and maintenance of a condition of EHEIs' governance without government.

In relation to institutional governance, there are many routes that can be taken towards drawing conclusions from the above discussion. I shall try to outline three directions. The first direction is related to issues of quality and governance, the second to issues of education policy and finally, the third direction looks at the role of HEIs. The directions are drawn and extracted from all levels of analysis of the primary and secondary data used in my research, and are bound up in my personal appreciation of the BP policy discourse.

My analytical outcome is that quality issues are dependent on the history of quality assurance mechanisms within different states and different institutions. And it is not difficult to conclude that most English HEIs are significantly more advanced in the introduction of quality mechanisms than the Greek ones. Moreover, in the previous section I presented specific accounts of quality assurance in the four participating institutions. Even though the sample is in no way representative, the point that arises strongly is that HEIs are being divided by the QA mechanisms. This division between high and low status institutions influences the type of students that enter them and makes it hard for the low status institutions to compete with those of high status. Raising the quality of teaching and student support in these institutions could be a tactic for attracting students. However, the example of the Greek polytechnic in relation to the policies of widening participation suggests that this is not the case. This particular institution, in order to reach the graduate requirement for QA, is lowering the entry requirements and as a consequence lowering the level of teaching in most students. Even though this may be an exceptional case, supported by the overall lowering of entry requirements in the national entry exams in Greece, the QA mechanism may lead not only to the division of institutions but also to the differentiation of standards for different institutions and consequently for different students. If this is the case at any point, it challenges both the notions of widening participation in HE, as HE will provide different qualifications for different students, and of common EHEA, as the idea of 'common' would be different for different institutions. Nevertheless, this scenario makes sense within

a competitive market-oriented HE environment, even at the European level, so that the leading institutions are clearly identifiable.

The second point which I would like to raise is related to education policy, and specifically to how education is being constructed, regulated and distributed. The primary data showed that it is mostly institutions 'in need' that are more likely to acknowledge the BP policy discourse, as it is perceived as an opportunity for institutional development. These institutions did not wait for the discourse to become national before adapting to its regional form. The question, then, is how did this happen? One explanation could be that those academics who participated in the process formed a policy-elite that works on a regional and institutional level, supporting the direct circulation of information from the one level to the other. The national policy level is still important, as it drives the pace of the change by legislating in the national context. Moreover, governance is not found only at the national level but primarily on the institutional level. For this reason, a neo-liberal form of governmentality is vital for the acceptance by institutions and their participants of the new values of competitiveness, transparency, mobility, efficiency and effectiveness. These are key features of all institutions and bodies that participate in the EHEA.

Finally, the overall direction of governance based on neo-liberal governmentality influences the role of HEIs significantly. This governmentality leads to a crude separation of the university from its constructive, purposeful need to serve the society and drives it towards the service of the market. The question is then, whether the university will lose its historic autonomy when it is financially bound to the market. And, if this is its new role, whether a new historically specific definition of the university is now needed. . That is, the end of university as we know it.

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## **Appendix 1: Official Documents**

### **The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999**

#### **Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education**

The European process, thanks to the extraordinary achievements of the last few years, has become an increasingly concrete and relevant reality for the Union and its citizens. Enlargement prospects together with deepening relations with other European countries, provide even wider dimensions to that reality. Meanwhile, we are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions. A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space. The importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount, the more so in view of the situation in South East Europe. The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998, which was underpinned by these considerations, stressed the Universities' central role in developing European cultural dimensions. It emphasised the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development. Several European countries have accepted the invitation to commit themselves to achieving the objectives set out in the declaration, by signing it or expressing their agreement in principle. The direction taken by several higher education reforms launched in the meantime in Europe has proved many Governments' determination to act. European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge. The course has been set in the right direction and with meaningful purpose. The achievement of greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of higher education nevertheless requires continual momentum in order to be fully accomplished. We need to support it through promoting concrete measures to achieve tangible forward steps. The 18th June meeting saw participation by authoritative experts and scholars from all our countries and provides us with very useful suggestions on the initiatives to be taken. We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions. While affirming our support to the general principles laid down in the Sorbonne declaration, we engage in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the third millennium, the following objectives, which we consider to be of primary relevance in order to establish the European area of higher education and to promote the European system of higher education world-wide: ...

- Adoption of a system of **easily readable and comparable degrees**, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system
- Adoption of a system essentially based on **two main cycles**, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.
- Establishment of a **system of credits** - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.
- Promotion of **mobility** by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
  - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
  - for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.
- Promotion of **European co-operation in quality assurance** with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.
- Promotion of the **necessary European dimensions in higher education**, particularly with regards to curricular development, interinstitutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

We hereby undertake to attain these objectives - within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate the European area of higher education. To that end, we will pursue the ways of intergovernmental co-operation, together with those of non governmental European organisations with competence on higher education. We expect Universities again to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour. Convinced that the establishment of the European area of higher education requires constant support, supervision and adaptation to the continuously evolving needs, we decide to meet again within two years in order to assess the progress achieved and the new steps to be taken.

**TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on May 19th 2001**

Two years after signing the Bologna Declaration and three years after the Sorbonne Declaration, European Ministers in charge of higher education, representing 32 signatories, met in Prague in order to review the progress achieved and to set directions and priorities for the coming years of the process. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objective of establishing the European Higher Education Area by 2010. The choice of Prague to hold this meeting is a symbol of their will to involve the whole of Europe in the process in the light of enlargement of the European Union.

Ministers welcomed and reviewed the report "Furthering the Bologna Process" commissioned by the follow-up group and found that the goals laid down in the Bologna Declaration have been widely accepted and used as a base for the development of higher education by most signatories as well as by universities and other higher education institutions. Ministers reaffirmed that efforts to promote mobility must be continued to enable students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff to benefit from the richness of the European Higher Education Area including its democratic values, diversity of cultures and languages and the diversity of the higher education systems.

Ministers took note of the Convention of European higher education institutions held in Salamanca on 29-30 March and the recommendations of the Convention of European Students, held in Göteborg on 24-25 March, and appreciated the active involvement of the European University Association (EUA) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) in the Bologna process. They further noted and appreciated the many other initiatives to take the process further. Ministers also took note of the constructive assistance of the European Commission.

Ministers observed that the activities recommended in the Declaration concerning degree structure have been intensely and widely dealt with in most countries. They especially appreciated how the work on quality assurance is moving forward. Ministers recognized the need to cooperate to address the challenges brought about by transnational education. They also recognized the need for a lifelong learning perspective on education.

**FURTHER ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE SIX OBJECTIVES OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

As the Bologna Declaration sets out, Ministers asserted that building the European Higher Education Area is a condition for enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of higher education institutions in Europe. They supported the idea that higher education should be considered a public good and is and will remain a public responsibility (regulations etc.), and that students are full members of the higher

education community. From this point of view Ministers commented on the further process as follows:

**Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees** Ministers strongly encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to take full advantage of existing national legislation and European tools aimed at facilitating academic and professional recognition of course units, degrees and other awards, so that citizens can effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills throughout the European Higher Education Area. Ministers called upon existing organisations and networks such as NARIC and ENIC to promote, at institutional, national and European level, simple, efficient and fair recognition reflecting the underlying diversity of qualifications.

**Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles** Ministers noted with satisfaction that the objective of a degree structure based on two main cycles, articulating higher education in undergraduate and graduate studies, has been tackled and discussed. Some countries have already adopted this structure and several others are considering it with great interest. It is important to note that in many countries bachelor's and master's degrees, or comparable two cycle degrees, can be obtained at universities as well as at other higher education institutions. Programmes leading to a degree may, and indeed should, have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs as concluded at the Helsinki seminar on bachelor level degrees (February 2001).

**Establishment of a system of credits** Ministers emphasized that for greater flexibility in learning and qualification processes the adoption of common cornerstones of qualifications, supported by a credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS-compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary. Together with mutually recognized quality assurance systems such arrangements will facilitate students' access to the European labour market and enhance the compatibility, attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. The generalized use of such a credit system and of the Diploma Supplement will foster progress in this direction.

**Promotion of mobility** Ministers reaffirmed that the objective of improving the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff as set out in the Bologna Declaration is of the utmost importance. Therefore, they confirmed their commitment to pursue the removal of all obstacles to the free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff and emphasized the social dimension of mobility. They took note of the possibilities for mobility offered by the European Community programmes and the progress achieved in this field, e.g. in launching the Mobility Action Plan endorsed by the European Council in Nice in 2000.

**Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance** Ministers recognized the vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. They also encouraged closer cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks.



They emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems. Further they encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms. Ministers called upon the universities and other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in cooperation with corresponding bodies from countries which are not members of ENQA, to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice.

**Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education** In order to further strengthen the important European dimensions of higher education and graduate employability Ministers called upon the higher education sector to increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with "European" content, orientation or organisation. This concerns particularly modules, courses and degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognized joint degree.

#### **FURTHERMORE MINISTERS EMPHASIZED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:**

**Lifelong learning** Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life.

**Higher education institutions and students** Ministers stressed that the involvement of universities and other higher education institutions and of students as competent, active and constructive partners in the establishment and shaping of a European Higher Education Area is needed and welcomed. The institutions have demonstrated the importance they attach to the creation of a compatible and efficient, yet diversified and adaptable European Higher Education Area. Ministers also pointed out that quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area. Ministers expressed their appreciation of the contributions toward developing study programmes combining academic quality with relevance to lasting employability and called for a continued proactive role of higher education institutions. Ministers affirmed that students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions. Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process.

**Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area** Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information

efforts. Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European Higher Education Area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.

## **CONTINUED FOLLOW-UP**

Ministers committed themselves to continue their cooperation based on the objectives set out in the Bologna Declaration, building on the similarities and benefiting from the differences between cultures, languages and national systems, and drawing on all possibilities of intergovernmental cooperation and the ongoing dialogue with European universities and other higher education institutions and student organisations as well as the Community programmes.

Ministers welcomed new members to join the Bologna process after applications from Ministers representing countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open. They accepted applications from Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey.

Ministers decided that a new follow-up meeting will take place in the second half of 2003 in Berlin to review progress and set directions and priorities for the next stages of the process towards the European Higher Education Area. They confirmed the need for a structure for the follow-up work, consisting of a follow-up group and a preparatory group. The follow-up group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time. The preparatory group should be composed of representatives of the countries hosting the previous ministerial meetings and the next ministerial meeting, two EU member states and two non-EU member states; these latter four representatives will be elected by the follow-up group. The EU Presidency at the time and the European Commission will also be part of the preparatory group. The preparatory group will be chaired by the representative of the country hosting the next ministerial meeting.

The European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe and the Council of Europe should be consulted in the follow-up work. In order to take the process further, Ministers encouraged the follow-up group to arrange seminars to explore the following areas: cooperation concerning accreditation and quality assurance, recognition issues and the use of credits in the Bologna process, the development of joint degrees, the social dimension, with specific attention to obstacles to mobility, and the enlargement of the Bologna process, lifelong learning and student involvement

### **“Realising the European Higher Education Area”**

Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003

#### **Preamble**

On 19 June 1999, one year after the Sorbonne Declaration, Ministers responsible for higher education from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration. They agreed on important joint objectives for the development of a coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2010. In the first follow-up conference held in Prague on 19 May 2001, they increased the number of the objectives and reaffirmed their commitment to establish the European Higher Education Area by 2010. On 19 September 2003, Ministers responsible for higher education from 33 European countries met in Berlin in order to review the progress achieved and to set priorities and new objectives for the coming years, with a view to speeding up the realisation of the European Higher Education Area. They agreed on the following considerations, principles and priorities: Ministers reaffirm the importance of the social dimension of the Bologna Process. The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. They emphasise that in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail.

Ministers take into due consideration the conclusions of the European Councils in Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002) aimed at making Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” and calling for further action and closer co-operation in the context of the Bologna Process. Ministers take note of the Progress Report commissioned by the Follow-up Group on the development of the Bologna Process between Prague and Berlin. They also take note of the Trends-III Report prepared by the European University Association (EUA), as well as of the results of the seminars, which were organised as part of the work programme between Prague and Berlin by several member States and Higher Education Institutions, organisations and students. Ministers further note the National Reports, which are evidence of the considerable progress being made in the application of the principles of the Bologna Process. Finally, they take note of the messages from the European Commission and the Council of Europe and acknowledge their support for the implementation of the Process. Ministers agree that efforts shall be undertaken in order to secure closer links overall between the higher education and research systems in their respective countries. The emerging European Higher Education Area will benefit from synergies with the European Research Area, thus strengthening the basis of the Europe of Knowledge. The aim is to preserve Europe’s cultural richness and linguistic diversity, based on its heritage of diversified traditions, and to foster its potential of innovation and social and economic development through enhanced co-operation among European Higher Education Institutions. Ministers recognise the fundamental role in the development of the European Higher Education Area played by Higher Education Institutions and student organisations. They take note of the message from the European University Association (EUA) arising from the Graz Convention of Higher Education Institutions,

the contributions from the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the communications from ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe. Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference.

### **Progress**

Ministers welcome the various initiatives undertaken since the Prague Higher Education Summit to move towards more comparability and compatibility, to make higher education systems more transparent and to enhance the quality of European higher education at institutional and national levels. They appreciate the co-operation and commitment of all partners - Higher Education Institutions, students and other stakeholders - to this effect.

Ministers emphasise the importance of all elements of the Bologna Process for establishing the European Higher Education Area and stress the need to intensify the efforts at institutional, national and European level. However, to give the Process further momentum, they commit themselves to intermediate priorities for the next two years: They will strengthen their efforts to promote effective quality assurance systems, to step up effective use of the system based on two cycles and to improve the recognition system of degrees and periods of studies.

### **Quality Assurance**

The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Ministers commit themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance. They also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

Therefore, they agree that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- ☐ A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- ☐ Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- ☐ A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- ☐ International participation, co-operation and networking.

At the European level, Ministers call upon ENQA through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account will be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks.

### ***Degree structure: Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles***

Ministers are pleased to note that, following their commitment in the Bologna Declaration to the two-cycle system, a comprehensive restructuring of the European landscape of higher education is now under way. All Ministers commit themselves to having started the implementation of the two cycle system by 2005.

Ministers underline the importance of consolidating the progress made, and of improving understanding and acceptance of the new qualifications through reinforcing dialogue within institutions and between institutions and employers. Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies. Ministers invite the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area. Ministers stress their commitment to making higher education equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means.

### ***Promotion of mobility***

Mobility of students and academic and administrative staff is the basis for establishing a European Higher Education Area. Ministers emphasise its importance for academic and cultural as well as political, social and economic spheres. They note with satisfaction that since their last meeting, mobility figures have increased, thanks also to the substantial support of the European Union programmes, and agree to undertake the necessary steps to improve the quality and coverage of statistical data on student mobility.

They reaffirm their intention to make every effort to remove all obstacles to mobility within the European Higher Education Area. With a view to promoting student mobility, Ministers will take the necessary steps to enable the portability of national loans and grants.

### ***Establishment of a system of credits***

Ministers stress the important role played by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in facilitating student mobility and international curriculum development. They note that ECTS is increasingly becoming a generalised basis for the national credit systems. They encourage further progress with the goal that the ECTS becomes not only a transfer but also an accumulation system, to be applied consistently as it develops within the emerging European Higher Education Area.

### ***Recognition of degrees: Adoption of a system of easily***

### ***readable and comparable degrees***

Ministers underline the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process, and call on the ENIC and NARIC networks along with the competent National Authorities to further the implementation of the Convention. They set the objective that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge. It should be issued in a widely spoken European language.

They appeal to institutions and employers to make full use of the Diploma Supplement, so as to take advantage of the improved transparency and flexibility of the higher education degree systems, for fostering employability and facilitating academic recognition for further studies.

### ***Higher education institutions and students***

Ministers welcome the commitment of Higher Education Institutions and students to the Bologna Process and recognise that it is ultimately the active participation of all partners in the Process that will ensure its long-term success. Aware of the contribution strong institutions can make to economic and societal development, Ministers accept that institutions need to be empowered to take decisions on their internal organisation and administration. Ministers further call upon institutions to ensure that the reforms become fully integrated into core institutional functions and processes.

Ministers note the constructive participation of student organisations in the Bologna Process and underline the necessity to include the students continuously and at an early stage in further activities. Students are full partners in higher education governance. Ministers note that national legal measures for ensuring student participation are largely in place throughout the European Higher Education Area. They also call on institutions and student organisations to identify ways of increasing actual student involvement in higher education governance. Ministers stress the need for appropriate studying and living conditions for the students, so that they can successfully complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background. They also stress the need for more comparable data on the social and economic situation of students.

### ***Promotion of the European dimension in higher education***

Ministers note that, following their call in Prague, additional modules, courses and curricula with European content, orientation or organisation are being developed. They note that initiatives have been taken by Higher Education Institutions in various European countries to pool their academic resources and cultural traditions in order to promote the development of integrated study programmes and joint degrees at first, second and third level.

Moreover, they stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes as well as proper provision for linguistic diversity and language learning, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability.

Ministers agree to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of such degrees and to actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees.

### ***Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education***

#### ***Area***

Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries.

Ministers declare that transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end. In all appropriate circumstances such fora should include the social and economic partners. They encourage the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions.

### ***Lifelong learning***

Ministers underline the important contribution of higher education in making lifelong learning a reality. They are taking steps to align their national policies to realise this goal and urge Higher Education Institutions and all concerned to enhance the possibilities for lifelong learning at higher education level including the recognition of prior learning. They emphasise that such action must be an integral part of higher education activity.

Ministers furthermore call those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of the ECTS credits. They stress the need to improve opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education.

### ***Additional Actions***

#### ***European Higher Education Area and European Research Area***

#### ***– two pillars of the knowledge based society***

Conscious of the need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA in a Europe of Knowledge, and of the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe, Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. They emphasise the importance of research and research training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and in enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase their cooperation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers.

Ministers will make the necessary effort to make European Higher Education Institutions an even more attractive and efficient partner. Therefore Ministers ask

Higher Education Institutions to increase the role and relevance of research to technological, social and cultural evolution and to the needs of society.

Ministers understand that there are obstacles inhibiting the achievement of these goals and these cannot be resolved by Higher Education Institutions alone. It requires strong support, including financial, and appropriate decisions from national Governments and European Bodies.

Finally, Ministers state that networks at doctoral level should be given support to stimulate the development of excellence and to become one of the hallmarks of the European Higher Education Area.

### ***Stocktaking***

With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate. Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- quality assurance
- two-cycle system
- recognition of degrees and periods of studies

Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process. Access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated.

### **Further Follow-up**

#### ***New members***

Ministers consider it necessary to adapt the clause in the Prague Communiqué on applications for membership as follows:

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.

Ministers decide to accept the requests for membership of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and to welcome these states as new members thus expanding the process to 40 European Countries.

Ministers recognise that membership of the Bologna Process implies substantial change and reform for all signatory countries. They agree to support the new signatory



countries in those changes and reforms, incorporating them within the mutual discussions and assistance, which the Bologna Process involves.

### ***Follow-up structure***

Ministers entrust the implementation of all the issues covered in the Communiqué, the overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting to a Follow-up Group, which shall be composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and UNESCO/CEPES as consultative members.

This group, which should be convened at least twice a year, shall be chaired by the EU residency, with the host country of the next Ministerial Conference as vice-chair. A Board also chaired by the EU Presidency shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. The Board will be composed of the chair, the next host country as vice-chair, the preceding and the following EU Presidencies, three participating countries elected by the Follow-up Group for one year, the European Commission and, as consultative members, the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. The Follow-up Group as well as the Board may convene ad hoc working groups as they deem necessary. The overall follow-up work will be supported by a Secretariat which the country hosting the next Ministerial Conference will provide. In its first meeting after the Berlin Conference, the Follow-up Group is asked to further define the responsibilities of the Board and the tasks of the Secretariat.

### ***Work programme 2003-2005***

Ministers ask the Follow-up Group to co-ordinate activities for progress of the Bologna Process as indicated in the themes and actions covered by this Communiqué and report on them in time for the next ministerial meeting in 2005.

### ***Next Conference***

Ministers decide to hold the next conference in the city of Bergen (Norway) in May 2005.

## **The European Higher Education Area - Achieving the Goals**

Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education,  
Bergen, 19-20 May 2005

We, Ministers responsible for higher education in the participating countries of the Bologna Process, have met for a mid-term review and for setting goals and priorities towards 2010. At this conference, we have welcomed Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as new participating countries in the Bologna Process. We all share the common understanding of the principles, objectives and commitments of the Process as expressed in the Bologna Declaration and in the subsequent communiqués from the Ministerial Conferences in Prague and Berlin. We confirm our commitment to coordinating our policies through the Bologna Process to establish the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010, and we commit ourselves to assisting the new participating countries to implement the goals of the Process.

### **I. Partnership**

We underline the central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students as partners in the Bologna Process. Their role in the implementation of the Process becomes all the more important now that the necessary legislative reforms are largely in place, and we encourage them to continue and intensify their efforts to establish the EHEA. We welcome the clear commitment of higher education institutions across Europe to the Process, and we recognise that time is needed to optimise the impact of structural change on curricula and thus to ensure the introduction of the innovative teaching and learning processes that Europe needs. We welcome the support of organisations representing business and the social partners and look forward to intensified cooperation in reaching the goals of the Bologna Process. We further welcome the contributions of the international institutions and organisations that are partners to the Process.

### **II. Taking stock**

We take note of the significant progress made towards our goals, as set out in the General Report 2003-2005 from the Follow-up Group, in EUA's *Trends IV* report, and in ESIB's report *Bologna with Student Eyes*.

At our meeting in Berlin, we asked the Follow-up Group for a mid-term stocktaking, focusing on three priorities – the degree system, quality assurance and the recognition of degrees and periods of study. From the stocktaking report we note that substantial progress has been made in these three priority areas. It will be important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries. We therefore see a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and governmental level.

### **The degree system**

We note with satisfaction that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries.

However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Furthermore, there is a need for greater dialogue, involving Governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including in appropriate posts within the public service.

We adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007. We ask the Follow-up Group to report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

We underline the importance of ensuring complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the proposed broader framework for qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as now being developed within the European Union as well as among participating countries. We ask the European Commission fully to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

### **Quality assurance**

Almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking.

However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation. Furthermore, we urge higher education institutions to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal mechanisms and their direct correlation to external quality assurance.

We adopt the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area as proposed by ENQA. We commit ourselves to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria. We welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review. We ask that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group. We underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions.

### **Recognition of degrees and study periods**

We note that 36 of the 45 participating countries have now ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. We urge those that have not already done so to ratify the Convention without delay. We commit ourselves to ensuring the full implementation of its principles, and to incorporating them in national legislation as appropriate. We call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the

ENIC/NARIC networks. We will draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. These plans will form part of each country's national report for the next Ministerial Conference. We express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.

We see the development of national and European frameworks for qualifications as an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education. We will work with higher education institutions and others to improve recognition of prior learning including, where possible, non-formal and informal learning for access to, and as elements in, higher education programmes.

### **III. Further challenges and priorities**

#### **Higher education and research**

We underline the importance of higher education in further enhancing research and the importance of research in underpinning higher education for the economic and cultural development of our societies and for social cohesion. We note that the efforts to introduce structural change and improve the quality of teaching should not detract from the effort to strengthen research and innovation. We therefore emphasise the importance of research and research training in maintaining and improving the quality of and enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of the EHEA. With a view to achieving better results we recognise the need to improve the synergy between the higher education sector and other research sectors throughout our respective countries and between the EHEA and the European Research Area.

To achieve these objectives, doctoral level qualifications need to be fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications using the outcomes-based approach. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. Considering the need for structured doctoral programmes and the need for transparent supervision and assessment, we note that the normal workload of the third cycle in most countries would correspond to 3-4 years full time. We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills, thus meeting the needs of the wider employment market. We need to achieve an overall increase in the numbers of doctoral candidates taking up research careers within the EHEA. We consider participants in third cycle programmes both as students and as early stage researchers. We charge the Bologna Follow-up Group with inviting the European University Association, together with other interested partners, to prepare a report under the responsibility of the Follow-up Group on the further development of the basic principles for doctoral programmes, to be presented to Ministers in 2007. Overregulation of doctoral programmes must be avoided.

#### **The social dimension**

The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. We therefore renew our commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic

background. The social dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects and to provide them with guidance and counseling services with a view to widening access.

### **Mobility**

We recognise that mobility of students and staff among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Aware of the many remaining challenges to be overcome, we reconfirm our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We shall intensify our efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. We urge institutions and students to make full use of mobility programmes, advocating full recognition of study periods abroad within such programmes.

### **The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world**

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.

## **IV. Taking stock on progress for 2007**

We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stocktaking process and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. We expect stocktaking to be based on the appropriate methodology and to continue in the fields of the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods, and by 2007 we will have largely completed the implementation of these three intermediate priorities. In particular, we shall look for progress in:

- implementation of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance as proposed in the ENQA report;
- implementation of the national frameworks for qualifications;
- the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level;
- creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning.

We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.

## **V. Preparing for 2010**

Building on the achievements so far in the Bologna Process, we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency. We must cherish our rich heritage and cultural diversity in contributing to a knowledge-based society. We commit ourselves to upholding the principle of public responsibility for higher education in the context of complex modern societies. As higher education is situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, it is also the key to Europe's competitiveness. As we move closer to 2010, we undertake to ensure that higher education institutions enjoy the necessary autonomy to implement the agreed reforms, and we recognise the need for sustainable funding of institutions.

The European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, where each level has the function of preparing the student for the labour market, for further competence building and for active citizenship. The overarching framework for qualifications, the agreed set of European standards and guidelines for quality assurance and the recognition of degrees and periods of study are also key characteristics of the structure of the EHEA.

We endorse the follow-up structure set up in Berlin, with the inclusion of the Education International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) as new consultative members of the Follow-up Group.

As the Bologna Process leads to the establishment of the EHEA, we have to consider the appropriate arrangements needed to support the continuing development beyond 2010, and we ask the Follow-up Group to explore these issues.

We will hold the next Ministerial Conference in London in 2007.

45 countries participate in the Bologna Process and are members of the Follow-up Group: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium (Flemish Community and French Community), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. In addition, the European Commission is a voting member of the Follow-up Group.

The Council of Europe, the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), the Education International (EI) Pan-European Structure, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European University Association

(EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) are consultative members of the Follow-up Group.

## **Appendix 2 – Research methodology and methods: practical issues and concerns**

### **Selection of Countries and Institutions**

At the beginning of this PhD I was hoping that the research would be conducted in three countries, England, France and Greece. These three countries were then selected due to their differences on three levels: a) the educational, b) the social and c) their differentiated position in the EU. In addition the interviews would be performed in one HEI in each country. This first idea whilst offering a more representative view of the BP realisation in three EU member states, would also limit the possibilities for a more in depth discussion. That is mainly due to the number of issues that relate to the Process and consequently to the HEIs. Moreover, on the practical level of a PhD research, there was not the financial means to support such extensive research.

Thus, my research is focused on two EU member states, England and Greece. Their selection is primarily based on the fact that they present significant differences in their tertiary educational system. For example in England, a student may acquire a degree after a minimum of three years of study whilst in Greece some departments require a minimum period of five years of studying. In Greece tertiary education is free and entrance to a HEI is only after national level examinations and selection process whilst in the English HE system students pay fees, even for their first degree, and their selection relies on the specific institution's standards. In addition, England is considered one of the leading countries in the European region whereas Greece is still, to a great extent, considered as a semi-peripheral country. Moreover, the selected countries present a great differentiation in their historical, political, economic, and consequently, social background. However, both England and Greece are subject to the same official European education policy guidelines and the way in which each one of them reacts to it, presents a source of great interest for me. At this point and in relation to a previous discussion, I should clarify that it is not the intention of the research to compare these two countries but rather to present two different models of response to the same education policy initiatives. The aim of this research is to show, in an indicative way, how two different EU member states react to a common European policy and the effects of the policy realisation on their HEIs. Finally, England and Greece, for the reasons mentioned above, can be seen as contrasting cases within the EU.

Moreover, I chose to conduct this research in two EU member states even though the BP signatory states consist also of non-EU countries. Even though this research does not aim to any comparative argumentation between the two countries I was very concerned that the choice of non-EU member states would widen the level of differentiation to a much larger extent. In addition, as it becomes apparent from this study, the politics that underpin the BP are complex. The HE perspective and experience offered by a non-EU member, although challenging, would, most likely, open a new area of political conflict within the BP realisation. As the present research was and is still struggling to grasp the politics within EU member states, the possibility of including at this stage of primary understanding a non EU member was not considered as applicable.



The research in each one of the two chosen countries takes the same form. Two HEIs in each country are selected. The first is a representative of an 'old university' and the second a representative of an ex-polytechnic or 'new university'. In each institution I tried to select and focus on two departments. One related to educational studies and one related to engineering or more vocational training. Thus, the study is constituted by eight departments, two in each of the four institutions divided between the two countries. The idea of having an educational and an engineering/vocational department and the selection of 'old/new' university, was extracted by the reading of the official documents and the information gathered from the internet search. Briefly, part of the HE harmonisation is the abandonment of the 'old/new' university division. Additionally, interest of the EU<sup>50</sup> research funding varies in relation to the academic field. Consequently it could be said that participants in HEIs may vary in the way they comprehend or are affected by the BP guidelines and implications.

### **Pilot**

Before entering the discussion of the actual data collection I should first present the pilot study as it offered a clear view of the possibilities and limitations regarding the data typology. The pilot consisted of seven interviews conducted in an old University in Greece in June 2003. Three of these interviews were with academics, three with administrative staff and one with a student. Two of the academics and the student were located in the department of Early Childhood Education and the third was in the department of Computer Engineering. The administrative members of staff were located in the main administration of the institution. The pilot worked successfully in an overall perspective and led to decisions related to the research. The first was that I had to approach the issues of the aide memoire in different ways in relation to the category of the sample that I was interviewing. Basically, the different approach depended on the change of loci of the focus of the interview. For example the students had limited knowledge of administrative issues and suchlike. Thus, according to whom I was interviewing during the data collection the focus of the interview moved from one issue to another. The second decision, that I have already mentioned earlier, was to focus my research interest on the appreciation of the policy that the respondents expressed during the interviews. Interestingly, the pilot allowed me to established contacts within the institutions that proved valuable during the data collection. The third decision is related to time management during the interviews. The interviews collected during the pilot were too long in terms of time; most of them exceeded one and a half hours. Even though during the data collection, especially in Greece, it was difficult to set a time limit, I tried to stay close to the duration of an hour. Finally, the seven interviews from the pilot make up part of the Greek sample.

### **Constructing semi-structured interviews**

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<sup>50</sup> I should draw attention to the distinction between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) realised though the BP as a European countries' initiative and the European Research Area (ERA), as a supportive instrument for the realisation of the EHEA, that is funded by the EU and mainly the European Commission.

The process of constructing the semi-structured interviews lies in the extraction of themes that are identified as of significance to the policy initiatives realisation process (the aide memoirs presenting the themes of the interviews can be found in Appendix 2). As mentioned earlier while discussing the official BP documents, part of the analytical approach adopted regarding them was to extract the main thematics concerning realisation paths for HEIs. However, as will be discussed in an elaborative way in the following theoretical chapter, the theme of 'quality' eclipsed the other issues and gained a central place in this research. For example, while analysing the secondary data the issue of quality was constantly reappearing as a driving force of the Bologna realisation process. In this way quality became one of the interview themes. During the collection of the primary data it was obvious from the pilot that any discussion related to the other themes led into a discussion related to 'quality'. Quality was the theme that all of the interviewees could relate to and discuss as it is part of their everyday personal experience. Finally, the aide memoirs existed in order to offer choice of what was going to be discussed. Their purpose was to open up the space of possibilities and not to define or regulate the discussions.

### **The Sample**

I shall start this section with a statement on qualitative sample derived by Stake: "For qualitative fieldwork, we draw a purposive sample, building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study" (Stake, 2000, p.446). In addition, and as has already been stated earlier in this section, the present study derives from a discourse-based approach on research and analysis. However, concerning the primary data collection, this research utilises qualitative methods.

The sample that supports this study was based on the recommendations of people that I 'had to speak to for this research' by people that I had already interviewed. A 'snowball' effect took place that highlighted a sample, which, on the one hand was most of the time willing to speak and express a personal opinion and on the other helped me to identify and reach people who had key positions in the institutions.

In more detail, in Greece it was rather easy for me to locate people in key positions through personal networking. The status of a PhD student in a foreign country with limited time for the data collection was also a positive feature in order to gain access to the Chancellors and vice-Chancellors of the research under investigation HEIs. In addition, the theme of the research was regarded with great interest on the part of the interviewees, which also offered a positive reaction. In England things were very different. It was difficult to establish the connection with the HEIs. Of the two English HEIs, the ex-polytechnic was much more co-operative. Not only the participants located in the ex-polytechnic were willing to speak and offer their personal opinion, but they also helped me to locate the sample I needed and supported me with additional insightful information. In the old-university the attitude, the style and the approach towards me was completely different. The number of people contacted was much larger but the actual interviewees were fewer than in the ex-polytechnic. The people located in the old-university were 'too busy' to participate and not very interested in the research. Finally, there are no interviews with students in England even though I attempted it twice. The students I spoke to explained that they were really unable to discuss any of the themes due to lack of knowledge and thus felt very uncomfortable with the process of interviewing.

Moving on, the sample is divided into three categories of people from each institution participating in the research: a) academic staff, b) administrative staff and c) students, the latter only in the Greek institutions. The administrative staff category also includes interviewees who hold a position in the central administration of each institution. The number of the participants varies between departments and institutions.

I tried to have as part of the sample people who hold key positions in each institution. I used this approach primarily because in large institutions like universities, not all the participants acknowledge, mainly for bureaucratic reasons, details or behind the scene negotiations of decision making procedures that lead to certain changes. That are fundamental to my research interest, are made. The sample is purposeful, attempting to include participants that would offer an insightful view of the BP policy discourse and/or the current HE discourse in general and the changes that are embedded in it, focusing both on the institutional position of the agents and on their personal experiences.

## Interviews

I shall now move on to present, firstly the process of conducting the interviews, secondly, I will move on to a reflexive discussion of the process and finally, I will illustrate the way that I treated the interviews analytically.

### Conducting the interviews

The interviews are semi-structured and at many points take the form of a conversation. As referred to by Kvale the semi-structured interview "has a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions to follow up the answers given and stories told from the subjects" (Kvale, 1996, p. 124). The interviews are based on themes. These themes are primarily extracted from the official documents and the issues they raise, but for each group of participants the interview takes a different form based on different approaches to the themes. The distinction between the themes that will be discussed in each interviewee is based on the pilot study (see Section iii) serves a dual need. The first need is to reduce the time of the interview, as most of the seven pilot interviews went on for more than one and a half hours. The second need is to have interviewees speaking about themes with which they are familiar and, as I have already mentioned, the bureaucracy or the position of somebody in large institutions, such as universities, does not allow them access to detailed knowledge of procedures for various reasons.

This complexity of the interviews, the different groups/different themes, and the fact that the interviews are semi-structured created a practical problem, which concerns my ability, as the sole interviewer to remember all the themes and the typology of the interviews for each group. In order to overcome this I used a type of agenda of the themes as an *aide mémoire* (see Appendix 2). Burgess (1984) used the same method. As he describes "this agenda acted more as an *aide mémoire* (italics in the original), which I could use to ensure that similar topics were in all interviews" (Burgess, 1984, p. 108). Finally, the interviews were tape-recorded. As Kvale (1996) points out the use of a tape recorder provides the possibility of re-listening to the interviews and making a valid transcription of them.

### Reflecting on the process of interviewing

In this section, I shall introduce features of importance of the way the interviews were conducted. I am white, lower middle-class, Greek, female and at the time that of the interview data collection in my mid-twenties. As I mentioned in a previous section my connection with the BP was not on good terms from the beginning. Thankfully, even before the pilot interviews I had the opportunity to discuss the BP with different types of participants in HEIs in Greece and realised that people need space and security in order to elaborate their thoughts. What should be noted, though, is that at the beginning of the field work the patience and the excitement of the researcher are unlimited. I was thirsty to hear everything and accept anything as valid information.

Of course this type of enthusiasm does not last long when you face the harsh reality of interviews. There were times when my outfit was defined as 'not proper' for an interview, times when I got a half hour lecture on research methods before the beginning of the interview and without the interviewee seeing the themes of the questionnaire before hand. There were other times when people's representation of the discourse moved from the broad context of interpretation to the limited context of probably being afraid to accept the obvious – e.g. an academic responsible for the Erasmus programme in his department from 1997-2003 claimed that there is no connection between the Erasmus programme and the BP, and moreover claimed no knowledge of the BP, while in one of his books he discusses changes in European HE curricula and refers to the BP. Finally, there were cases where the interviewees were not willing to offer any personal point of view and cases where the interviewees simply did not wish to talk and gave monosyllabic answers.

Another issue that arose was when the interviewee really did have no awareness of the BP, at least under that name. That was the case with most of the English participants. In this situation, I had to introduce a different approach starting with the current HE discourse in England. However, this did not alter the themes of the interview as the same trends are traced within the two discourses – BP/English HE discourse.

Moreover, a reflexive approach was adopted when conducting the interviews. That was both in relation to the interviewees and in relation to my position as a researcher. In each interview I was being re-defined and re-positioned by the discursive process. My request to the interviewees was not only to reflect on institutional changes deriving from a specific discourse but also to expose their personal experiences, feelings and thoughts regarding these changes. As mentioned earlier, I had to create a secure space for them in which they would feel comfortable to elaborate on their views. A way of doing so was to trace, early in the interview, hints related to their perspective and offer to them positive comments during the interview. Mainly and in general terms I tried to establish whether they were happy with the changes or not and supportive of the discourse or not. Another way was to claim no knowledge or understanding of the institutional functioning and its operational features. Close to what I am trying to explain is Lincoln and Cuba's (2000) description of the researcher's reflexivity upon him/herself:

Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting. Shulamit Reinharz (1997, p.3), for example, argues that we not only '*bring* the self to the field ... (we also) *create* the self in the field' (Lincoln and Cuba, 2000, p. 183).

In other words, the conduct of the interviews was based on a process of multiple adaptations to discourses that expressed the interpretations and perspectives of the interviewees.

### **Analytical treatment of the interviews**

In analytical terms the interviews were treated as discourses. They are disjointed spaces that offer different realities, sometimes similar to each other and sometimes oppositional, contradicting and non-coherent. On the one hand these spaces refer to the natural place where the interview was conducted

The spaces in which we have been invited provide recuperation, resistance, and the makings of "home". They are not just a set of geographic/spatial arrangements, they are theoretical, analytic and spatial displacements – a crack, a fissure in an organisation or in a community. Individual dreams, collective work and critical thoughts are smuggled in and then re-imagined (Fine et al., 2000, p. 122).

Or may refer to the discursive, interpretive and representative spaces that are opened to the researcher

An alternative approach treats interview data as accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds. This narrative approach claims that, by abandoning the attempt to treat respondents' accounts as potentially 'true' pictures of 'reality', we open up for analysis the culturally rich methods through which interviewers and interviewees, in concert, generate plausible amounts of the world (Silverman, 2000, 823).

In addition, the interviews are not seen as the product of a sole person. A discursively dialectic process takes place and the input of the interviewer carries the same weight as that of the interviewee. As much as I tried to stay 'invisible' during that process no claim can be made that the interviews were not influenced by my perspective of the discourse, my questions and the way I led the discussions. And I would support, in relation to this research, the idea presented by Fontana and Fey (2000) that regards interviews as 'negotiated accomplishments' as follows:

There is a growing realisation that interviewers are not the mythical, neutral tools envisioned by survey research. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in interactions with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place. As Schwandt (1997) notes, "it has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually rounded and jointly structured by interviewer and respondent" (Schwandt, 1997, p.79 quoted in/ and Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 647).

The process of interviewing not only created new knowledge through discursive negotiations but it also offered different understandings and voices. Even though these will be presented in the data analysis (Chapter 3) they had a significant influence upon my appreciation of the BP policy discourse, theoretically and analytically. Moreover, the interaction between primary and secondary data in addition to the understanding deriving from my interpretation of the discourse has worked in a constantly

constructive and re-constructive way for the evolution of the research and the writing of the thesis.

In a more detailed view, the secondary official documents analytically located the features of the BP policy discourse. The primary data offered not only the interpretations of the HEIs participants but also the stance that the institutions took on the policy initiatives. In this way, the theoretical appreciation of this research that is presented in the following chapter (Chapter 2) consists of and is generated by the simultaneous analytical treatment of both secondary and primary data.

## **Reflection**

The last section of this chapter is dedicated to a reflective discussion on the methodology, data collection and ethical considerations of this research. Some of these issues have already been mentioned whilst discussing the area of their concern. Here I will try to summarise them and defend the decisions that were taken in each case.

## **Methodological issues and research limitations**

The main methodological issues of this research are concerned with the nature of the BP. Even though it is treated in this thesis as a regional education policy, in the official documents of the process it is not characterised as such, but rather as a process does not present any legal obligations upon its signatory countries. However, the EU sets the convergence of EHE through the BP as a topic for countries that express an interest in becoming part of the EU - Romania for example-. On an internal EU level, as both of the countries studied in this research are EU member states, the member states are obliged, even unofficially, to follow the EU evolution. Interestingly, the level of commitment to the EU guidelines varies in different member states. Seeing Greece and England in a parallel way, this differentiation of commitment is obvious, not only in relation to the BP but also in other areas.

Furthermore, the BP is an ongoing process. For this reason it is still mutable and is constantly being redefined (see official documents in Appendix 1), especially on the level of realisation. The non-static nature of the Process is often reflected in national and institutional policies with consequent effects on this research.

As the research is being conducted in institutions with different statuses and in different countries it could be claimed that there is no coherence between the data that would permit their consistent discussion. As I have already mentioned earlier this research does not claim the possibility for any generalisation regarding the EHE or the HE of the countries in which it is being conducted. This research should be seen as the reactions of four institutions towards the BP through the voice of their participants. It can only be described as non-representative. The aim of this research is to try to capture a moment of the process towards the EHEA.

Finally, I should also make explicit the fact that this study has no intention to claim any comparability either between the two countries or between the four institutions. The study aims to offer representations of two different settings in order to introduce the diversity of the Bologna initiatives realisation process.

## **Issues of data collection**

During the process of data collection on of the main problems that occurred was accessibility to the sample. Accessibility relied on recommendations by people already



interviewed and their working and social connections, not always with a positive result. This caused great delays in the data collection, especially in England.

In each one of the three sample categories I faced different issues. In relation to the category of academics, time was always a problem. The administrators were often sceptical about whether they should express a personal opinion and the students – in Greece–, due to lack of information, felt uncomfortable with the interview. In the latter two cases I abandoned the main themes of the interview and proceeded with a discussion focused on their everyday life in the institution.

I saw each interview as unique. That was both a means and a result of the interview process. As a means it helped me follow the conceptualisations of each interviewee and as a result I saw myself becoming mutable according to the person I was interviewing. Most of the sample were very interested in the research and continued the discussion even after the end of the interview. However, I heard negative criticism in relation to my research on two occasions.

In relation to the translation of the interviews, I tried to stay as close as possible to the words of the interviewees. That was problematic with the Greek data on occasions that the interviewee was using an informal language or linguistic expressions that cannot be translated precisely. On such occasions I tried to express their views in the most relevant way according to the English language. The main part of the translations of the Greek interviews are conducted by me and corrected grammatically by English native speakers.

### **Ethical issues**

All the people that participated in this research as interviewees did so after having being informed about the theme of this research and after offering their consent. The names of the four institutions and of all the interviewees have been changed to protect their anonymity towards privacy and confidentiality. The representation of the institutions and of the voices of the interviewees is offered with the highest accuracy possible. However, their interpretation is mine.

### Appendix 3: Aid memoir

#### Greece

#### Interview Schedule for academic staff – professors, lecturers, whom ever teaches or researches

##### **A. Personal data:**

##### **1. Professional experience**

- a. how many years in the specific institution
- b. other positions held before this
- c. what is their present position
- d. which are their obligations and privileges
- e. comparison with previous positions that they held
- f. how they applied for this position and why
- g. education, qualifications
- h. why do they think that they got the place, what were the qualifications that the institution was seeking, if they can think of anything else that made a difference

##### **B. memoir of interview themes**

##### **1. 1. Evaluation:**

- a. internal evaluation: how it appears
- b. external evaluation
- c. what is the level of excellence and from what is consisted
- d. how much time do they spend on it
- e. what is the importance of it for them personally and then as university staff
- f. what is the importance of it for the department and the institution
- g. if they exist and which are the evaluation units in their department, institution
- h. how much has it changed their work and their personal approach on it

##### **2. programmes of mobility: Socrates, Erasmus → seeking for their perception**

- a. amount of students participating
- b. how they present and how they approach the issue
- c. what is their opinion about it
- d. how many foreign students they have, if any
- e. in what they locate its construction as a mobility mechanism, what is the logic impended on it
- f. would they as students hypothetically participate: why yes/ why no
- g. have they study abroad and how would they describe their experience in relation to i) differences in the programme of studies, ii) how many years (time) was their course, iii) qualifications awarded, iv) recognition of those studies when they came back, v) economic support if any, vi) why did they chose to study abroad?
- h. Whether and how often do they travel abroad for conferences, seminars
- i. How do they manage to stay informed about new issues in their field
- j. how much is their own interest
- k. are they getting any financial support (which body and what) or what are their motives

**3. cooperation between EHEI**

- a. description of their institutions' cooperation if they know
- b. in relation to Socrates and Erasmus
- c. in research, teaching – learning
- d. which modules do they recognise from a student that has send time abroad, which modules they would not recognise
- e. are they participating in any type of European or other international cooperation
- f. how is the coordination established between the different institutions
- g. what is the role of the teaching/researching staff (description/example)
- h. what is the role of the administrative staff (description/example)
- i. how often do they meet (seminars, conferences etc)
- j. who is sponsoring the cooperation, for how long and what are their identified objects in relation to teaching, researching and organisation of the institutional cooperation

**4. two cycles of studies**

- a. their opinion on the two cycles, the possibility of moving to a 3-5-8 model
- b. relation of their HEI institution's structure in comparison with other European countries
- c. have they been any identified changes to the undergraduate or postgraduate programmes of studies (curricula) for greater compliance between Und/post-graduate studies or between their institution with others in their country or in other countries

**5. EU funding, Sixth framework**

- a. do they take any: why yes/why no
- b. do they have any other sponsors
- c. were are the money allocated to
- d. who is responsible for the funding

**6. how does the money from external university financial providers influence research****7. what is the procedure to succeed in finding a sponsor for your research****8. how do they find researchers/ research students to support their studies**

- a. how easy or difficult is to attract researchers/research students
- b. whether and how do they get paid and by whom

**9. their reflection to the previous discussion regarding the Bologna Process**

- a. whether they know about
- b. their appreciation of this idea and of the process in general

**Interview Schedule for Students Undergraduate/postgraduate****A. Personal data:****2. in which department are they**

- a. year of studies
- b. how did they chose the institution and the department

- c. which variable did they check
- d. was it their first choice

3. **description of their educational experience**

4. **Professional experience**

- i. Do they have any
- j. What kind

5. **are they thinking of continuing their studies after undergraduate: why yes/why no**

- a. in the same field or other
- b. in the same institution
- c. what are the feature they examine

B. **memoir of interview themes**

6. **Evaluation: if they that exists (underg/postgr)**

- i. Do they feel forms in which they evaluate their teachers modules
- j. internal evaluation: how it appears
- k. external evaluation
- l. what is the level of excellence and from what is consisted
- m. how much time do they spend on it
- n. what is the value of it for them personally and then as university staff
- o. what is the value of it for the department and the institution
- p. which are the evaluation units in their department, institution
- q. how much has it changed their work and their personal approach on it

7. **programmes of mobility: Socrates, Erasmus**

- l. amount of students participating
- m. how they presented and how they approach the issue
- n. what is their opinion about it
- o. how many foreign students they have, if any
- p. in what they locate its construction as a mobility mechanism, what is the logic impended on it
- q. would they as students hypothetically participate: why yes/ why no
- r. support of their families and friends in this kind of possibility and decision
- s. if they have already participated: description of their experience
- t. in relation to research, teaching – learning
- u. which modules were recognised from a student that has send time abroad, which modules they were not recognised

8. **cooperation between EHEI**

- a. whether they have foreign teachers or colleagues
- b. are they getting informed about what is going on in their field internationally
- c. how: personal interest or teachers'/departments' interest to do so

9. **two cycles of studies**

- d. their opinion on the two cycles, the possibility of moving to the 3-5-8 pattern

- e. relation of their HEI institution's structure in comparison with other European countries

**10. ICT, new technologies, lifelong learning**

- a. which qualifications in your field are dominant at the present moment and maybe a diagnosis for the future dominant qualifications
- b. how do they approach lifelong learning in their department or field
- c. how does new technology interfere with their personal work
- d. how much do you use new technologies
- e. do you have modules related to them/ how many
- f. are they satisfactory
- g. does the provision of computers applies to the number of students
- h. do you think your staying in a HEI is part of a lifelong learning process
- i. do you think your staying in a HEI is part of becoming member of a qualified labour force
- j. how do they find they qualifications they gain in relation to applicability to the labour market
- k. how do they find they qualifications they gain in relation to strictly academic knowledge: if there is a distinction and on what is embedded

**11. what is the procedure to succeed in finding a sponsor for your research as a research student (description of the procedure and their interpretation of it/ opinion)**

- a. how much does the academic and administrative staff help and in what kind of situations (give example)
- b. how are the money allocated in the people who a related to the research or the research programme

**12. what do they think about this their reflection to the previous discussion regarding the Bologna Process**

- c. whether they know about
- d. their appreciation of this idea and of the process in general

**England****Interview Schedule for researchers/professors/administrators**

- Personal information on their education and their position in the institution
- The focus of their institution
- Start point: Bologna/ White paper 'The future of higher education', January 2003.

1. **changes** (management and governance/ evaluation/ funding/ mobility/ ex-polytechnic versus university/ different types of institutions/ how the changes have changed their everyday work)

- a. trace changes lately in the institution

2. Evaluation:

- r. internal **evaluation**: how it appears
  - s. external evaluation
  - t. what is the level of excellence and from what is consisted
  - u. how much time do they spend on it
  - v. what is the value of it for them personally and then as university staff
  - w. what is the value of it for the department and the institution
  - x. which are the evaluation units in their department, institution
  - y. how much has it changed their work and their personal approach on it
- b. programmes of **mobility**: Socrates, Erasmus
  - v. amount of students participating
  - w. **international and European students**
  - x. how they presented and how they approach the issue
  - y. what is their opinion about it
  - z. how many foreign students they have, if any
  - aa. in what they locate its construction as a mobility mechanism, what is the logic impended on it
  - bb. would they as students hypothetically participate: why yes/ why no
  - cc. in relation to Socrates and Erasmus
  - dd. in research, teaching – learning
  - ee. which modules do they recognise from a student that has send time abroad, which modules they would not recognise

3. **cooperation between EHEI**

- a. in which level
- b. European cooperation and how do they see that
- c. In relation to the US – cooperation or competition?
- c. two cycles of studies
- f. *their opinion on the two cycles, the possibility of moving to the 3-5-8 pattern*
- g. relation of their HEI institution's structure in comparison with other European countries

4. **lifelong learning opportunity and qualifications**

- a. appreciation of the open university as a
- b. whether there is a pattern that they follow in it

5. how does the funding from external university financial providers influence research

6. what is the procedure to succeed in finding a sponsor for your research

7. ex-polytechnic versus university

8. whether they can locate these changes to a European context

- a. if their institution has or is thinking to adopt a more European perspective
- b. if they feel Europeans in the sense of a European citizen
- c. England's attitude towards European education policy (CESHE)

9. EU funding, Sixth framework

- finally, 'University' is frequently used, for reading ease, as a substitute for 'Higher Education Institution' White paper, **comment on that**
- **reflect on everything and present a personal view and a prediction for what is to follow**, in institutional and European level